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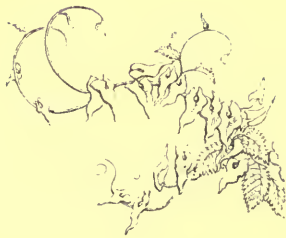


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THE POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
JOHN KEATS.









*John Keats.*

THE  
POETICAL WORKS

OF  
JOHN KEATS.

WITH A MEMOIR BY RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES.



ILLUSTRATED BY 120 DESIGNS, ORIGINAL AND FROM THE ANTIQUE,  
DRAWN ON WOOD BY

GEORGE SCHARF, JUN., F.S.A., F.R.S.L.

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Where no reference is given, the Illustrations are original. The introduction of wild-flowers was suggested by the poet's delight in them, mentioned at p. xxxvii. of the Memoir.—G. S.





## MEMOIR OF JOHN KEATS.

BY

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES.

---

THE "Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of John Keats," published in 1848, contain the biography of the Poet, mainly conveyed in the language of his own correspondence. The Editor had little more to do than to arrange and connect the letters freely supplied to him by kinsmen and friends, and leave them to tell as sad, and, at the same time, as ennobling a tale of life as ever engaged the pen of poetic fiction. But these volumes can scarcely be in the hands of all to whose hours of study or enjoyment the Poems of Keats may find ready access; and thus it has been desired that the Editor should transcribe into a few pages the

characteristics of an existence in itself so short, but radiant with genius and rich in virtue.

The publication of three small volumes of verse, some earnest friendships, one profound passion, and a premature death, are the main incidents here to be recorded—ordinary indeed, and common to many men whose names have passed, and are passing, away, and here only notable, as illustrating the wonderful nature and progress of certain mental faculties, and as exhibiting a character which inspires the deepest human sympathy amidst all its demands on our admiration.

John Keats was born on the 29th of October, 1795, in the upper rank of the middle-class, his mother possessing sufficient means to give her children an excellent education, when left a widow in 1804. She is reputed to have been a woman of saturnine demeanour, but on an occasion of illness, John, then a child between four and five years old, remained for hours as a sentinel at her door, with a drawn sword, that she might not be disturbed: and at her death, which occurred when he was at Mr. Clarke's school at Enfield, he hid himself for several days in a nook under the master's desk, passionately inconsolable—traits of disposition that illustrate his character as a boy, energetic, ardent, and popular. "He combined," writes one of his school-fellows, "a terrier-like resoluteness with the most noble placability;" and another mentions that his singular animation and ability in all exercises of skill and courage, impressed them with a

conviction of his future greatness, "but rather in a military or some such active sphere of life, than in the peaceful arena of literature."\* This impression was assisted by the rare vivacity of his countenance and much beauty of feature: his eyes were large and sensitive, flashing with strong emotion or suffused with tender sympathies; his hair hung in thick brown ringlets round a head diminutive for the breadth of the shoulders below, while the smallness of the lower limbs, which in later life marred the proportion of his person was not then apparent, any more than the undue prominence of the lower lip, which afterwards gave his face too pugnacious a character to be entirely pleasing, but at that time only completed such an image as the ancients had of Achilles—of joyous and glorious youth everlastingly striving.

Careless of an ordinary school-reputation, his zeal for the studies themselves led him frequently to spend his holidays over Virgil or Fenelon, and when his master forced him into the open air for his health, he would be found walking with a book in his hand. The scholarship of the establishment had no peculiar pretensions, and the boy's learning was limited to the elements of a liberal education. He was never taught Greek, and he took his mythology from Tooke's Pantheon and Lemprière's Dictionary, making the affiliation of his mind with the old Hellenic world the more marvellous and interesting. It is doubtful whether

\* Mr. E. Holmes, author of the "Life of Mozart," &c.

at any time his information exceeded these scanty limits, and it is a curious speculation whether deeper and more regular classical studies would have checked or encouraged the natural consanguinity, so to say, of his fancy with the ideal life of ancient Greece, and whether a more distinct knowledge of what the old mythology really meant, would, or would not, have hindered that reconstruction of forms

“ Not yet dead,  
But in old marbles ever beautiful,”

which is now not the less agreeable from being the evolution of his unlearned and unaided imagination.

Mr. Charles Cowden Clarke, the son of his preceptor, remained the friend of Keats, when removed from school in 1810, and apprenticed for five years to a surgeon of some eminence at Edmonton. This intelligent companion supplied him with books, which he eagerly perused, but so little expectation was formed of the direction in which his talents lay, that when in 1812, he asked for the loan of Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, Mr. Clarke remembers that the family were amused at the ambitious desires of their former pupil. He must indeed have known something of Shakspeare, for he had told a young school-fellow that “ he thought no one would dare to read *Macbeth* alone at two o'clock in the morning;” but it was Spenser that struck the secret spring and opened the flood-gates of his fancy. “ He ramped through the scenes of the romance,” writes Mr. Clarke, “ like a young horse turned into a spring meadow :” he could talk



of nothing else: his countenance would light up at each rich expression, and his strong frame would tremble with emotion as he read. The lines "in imitation of Spenser" are the earliest known verses of his composition, and to the very last the traces of this main impulse of his poetic life are visible. But few memorials remain of his other studies: there is a "Sonnet to Byron" of little merit, dated 1814; one of much grace and juvenile conceit on Chaucer's Tale of the "Flower and the Leaf," written on the blank leaf, while his friend was asleep over the book; and one of most clear thought and noble diction, "On first looking into Chapman's Homer." It was to Mr. Clarke again that he owed his introduction to this fine interpretation, which preserves so much of the heroic simplicity and the metre of which, after all various attempts, including that of the hexameter, still appears the best adapted, from its length and its powers, to represent in English the Greek epic verse. Unable to read the original, Keats had long stood by Homer as a great dumb name, and now he read it all night long, with intense delight, even shouting aloud, when some especial passage struck his imagination.

The "Epistles" to his friends and his brother George, then a clerk in London, indicate a rapid development of the poetic faculty, especially free from the formalism and imitation which encumber the early writings even of distinguished poets, and full of an easy gaiety, which at times runs into conversational common-place, or helps itself out

of difficulties by quaintnesses that look like affectations. But, even in these first efforts, the peculiarity of making the rhymes to rest on the most picturesque and varied words, instead of the conventional resonance of unimportant syllables, is distinctive, and an effect is produced which from its very novelty often mars the force and beauty of the expression, and lowers the sense of poetic harmony into an ingenious concurrence of sounds. It is also a palpable consequence of this mode of composition, that the sense appears too often made for the rhyme, and, while most poets would be loth to allow how frequently the necessity of the rhyme suggests the corresponding thought, here the uncommon prominence of the rhyme keeps this effect constantly before the reader. Yet, when approached with sympathetic feeling and good will, this impression soon vanishes before the astonishing affluence of thought and imagination, which at once explains and excuses the defect, if it be one. Picture after picture seems to rise before the poet's eye in a succession so rapid as to embarrass judgment and limit choice, and fancies and expressions that elsewhere would be strange and far-fetched are here felt to have been the first suggested.

When Keats's apprenticeship was over, and he removed to London to "walk the hospitals," he soon became acquainted with men capable of appreciating and cultivating his genius. Among the foremost Leigh Hunt welcomed him with a sympathy that ripened into friendship, and the sonnet "on the day Leigh Hunt left prison," attests the earnest-

ness of reciprocal affection. They read and walked much together, and wrote in competition on subjects proposed. Much has been said of the influence of this connection on the writings of Keats, and much of their mannerism has been traced to this source. The justice of this supposition is more than doubtful, and the stupid malevolence of the criticisms which mainly sustained it is now too well exposed to require refutation. It is indeed probable that the fresh mind of Keats was directed by Hunt into many of the channels which had delighted his own, and that peculiarities that had taken the fancy of the one were easily pressed on the imagination of the other. But Keats always defended himself energetically against the notion that he belonged to Leigh Hunt's or any other school. "I refused" he wrote "to visit Shelley, that I might have my own unfettered scope," and he never ceased to desire to bear all the defects of his own originality. It is no contradiction to this to infer, that if the talents of Keats had been subjected to the discipline of a complete and regular classical education, and a self-distrust inculcated by the continual presence of the highest original models of thought and form, he would have escaped very much of the mannerism which accompanied his early efforts; but it may be doubted whether the well-trained plant would have thrown out such luxurious shoots and expanded into such rare and delightful foliage. The most that can be said of the influence of Leigh Hunt and his friends on Keats was that he became obnoxious to those evils which inevitably beset every literary *coterie*, that he

learned rather to encourage than to restrain individual peculiarities, and to demand a public and permanent attention for matters that could only justly claim a private and personal interest. But on the other hand it is impossible to deny that in this genial atmosphere the faculty of the young poet ripened with incredible facility, and advantages of literary culture were afforded which no just critic can disparage or conceal. Chatterton eating out his heart in his desolate lodging and ignoble service to low magazines, or Burns drinking down thought in country taverns and town society little more refined, afford mournful contrasts to the pleasant and elevating associations enjoyed by Keats during his residence in London, which he would have been the last to undervalue. Hazlitt, Haydon, Godwin, Basil Montague and his remarkable family, and many other persons of literary and artistic reputation received him with kindness: Mr. Reynolds, whose poems written under feigned names are full of merit, Mr. Dilke, whose intelligent criticism, large information, and manly sense, have had so beneficial an effect on the modern history of English letters, Archdeacon Bailey, and Severn the poetical painter, became his devoted friends: while in Mr. Ollier, himself a poet, and afterwards in Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, he found considerate and liberal publishers.

It soon became apparent that the profession for which young Keats was destined was too unsuitable to be maintained. There remain careful annotations on the lectures

he attended, but when he had once entered on the practical part of his business, although successful in all his operations, he found his mind so oppressed with an over-wrought apprehension of doing harm, that he determined on abandoning the course of life to which he had devoted a considerable portion of his small fortune. "My dexterity" he said, "used to seem to me a miracle, and I resolved never to take up a surgical instrument again." The little volume of poems, the beloved first-born, scarcely touched the public attention: it was not even observed as a sign of the existence of a new Cockney poet, whom the critic was bound to silence or to convert, or as the production of a new member of the revolutionary propaganda, to be hunted down with ridicule or obloquy. These honours were reserved for maturer labours. The characteristic lines,

"Glory and loveliness have passed away, &c.,"

were written in the midst of a merry circle of friends, who happened to be present when the printer sent to say that if there was to be a dedication he must send it directly; and he did so,—for the main thought, the regeneration of the images of Pagan beauty, was ever present with him. His health at this time was far from good, and in the spring of 1817, he returned to the quiet of the Isle of Wight to write "Endymion," a subject long germinating in his fancy, and thus shadowed out in the first poem of his early volume:—

"He was a poet, sure a lover too,  
Who stood on Latmus' top, what time there blew  
Soft breezes from the myrtle vale below;

And brought, in faintness solemn, sweet, and slow,  
 A hymn from Dian's temple ; while upswelling,  
 The incense rose to her own starry dwelling.  
 But tho' her face was clear as infants' eyes,  
 Tho' she stood smiling o'er the sacrifice,  
 The poet wept at her so piteous fate,  
 Wept that such beauty should be desolate :  
 So in fine wrath some golden sounds he won,  
 And gave meek Cynthia her Endymion."

The solitude was not very propitious to his work, but he composed some other good verses, such as the sonnet "On the Sea," and others illustrative of his thoughts and feelings at the time. In a letter to Haydon he thus expressed himself with a noble humility: "I must think that difficulties nerve the spirit of a man; they make our prime objects a refuge as well as a passion; the trumpet of Fame is as a tower of strength, the ambitious bloweth it, and is safe." \* \* \* "There is no greater sin, after the seven deadly, than to flatter oneself into the idea of being a great poet, or one of those beings who are privileged to wear out their lives in the pursuit of honour. How comfortable a thing it is to feel that such a crime must bring its heavy penalty, that if one be a self-deluder, accounts must be balanced." Again to Hunt: "I have asked myself so often why I should be a Poet more than other men, seeing how great a thing it is, how great things are to be gained by it, that at last the idea has grown so monstrously beyond my seeming power of attainment, that the other day I nearly consented with myself to drop into a Phaethon. Yet 'tis a disgrace to fail even in a huge attempt, and at this moment

I drive the thought from me. I began my poem about a fortnight since, and have done some every day, except travelling ones.”

In September he visited his friend Bailey, at Oxford, and wrote thence as follows:—“ Believe me, my dear——, it is a great happiness to me that you are, in this finest part of the year, winning a little enjoyment from the hard world. In truth, the great Elements we know of, are no mean comforters: the open sky sits upon our senses like a sapphire-crown; the air is our robe of state; the earth is our throne; and the sea a mighty minstrel playing before it—able, like David’s harp, to make such a one as you forget almost the tempest-cares of life. \* \* \* \* I shall ever feel grateful to you for having made known to me so real a fellow as Bailey. He delights me in the selfish, and, please God, the disinterested part of my disposition. If the old Poets have any pleasure in looking down at the enjoyers of their works, their eyes must bend with double satisfaction upon him. I sit as at a feast when he is over them, and pray that if, after my death, any of my labours should be worth saving, they may have as ‘honest a chronicler’ as Bailey. Out of this, his enthusiasm in his own pursuit and for all good things is of an exalted kind, worthy a more healthful frame and an untorn spirit. He must have happy years to come; ‘he shall not die—by God.’”\*

\* In p. 62 of the “Life and Letters of Keats,” the biographer spoke of the decease of Mr. Bailey: he had been erroneously informed as to that

Some later extracts from letters to this excellent friend are interesting; they were part of the occupation of the winter of 1817-18, which Keats passed at Hampstead among his friends, perhaps the happiest period of his life.—“I have heard Hunt say, ‘Why endeavour after a long poem?’ to which I should answer, ‘Do not the lovers of poetry like to have a little region to wander in, where they may pick and choose, and in which the images are so numerous that many are forgotten and found new in a second reading,—which may be food for a week’s stroll in the summer. \* \* \* Besides, a long poem is a test of Invention, which I take to be the polar-star of poetry, as Fancy is the sails, and Imagination the rudder. Did our great Poets ever write short pieces? I mean, in the shape of tales. This same Invention seems indeed of late years to have been forgotten as a poetical excellence.’ But enough of this, I put on no laurels till I shall have finished *Endymion*.”

“One thing has pressed upon me lately and increased my humility and capability of submission, and that is this truth: men of genius are great as certain ethereal chemicals operating on the mass of neutral intellect, but they have not any individuality, any determined character. I would call the top and head of those who have a proper self, *Men of Power*.” \* \* \* \* \* “I wish I was

event, but he regrets to add that the newspapers, within the last few weeks, record the death of Archdeacon Bailey, lately returned from Ceylon, where he had long resided.



as certain of the end of all your troubles as that of your momentary start about the authenticity of the Imagination. I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the heart's affections, and the truth of Imagination. What the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth, whether it existed before or not;—for I have the same idea of all our passions as of Love; they are all, in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty. The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream: he awoke and found it Truth. I am more zealous in this affair, because I have never yet been able to perceive how anything can be known for Truth by consecutive reasoning, and yet it must be so. Can it be that even the greatest philosopher ever arrived at his goal without putting aside numerous objections? However it may be, O for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts! It is 'a vision in the form of youth,'—a shadow of reality to come,—and this consideration has further convinced me,—for it has come as auxiliary to another speculation of mine,—that we shall enjoy ourselves hereafter by having what we call happiness on earth repeated in a finer tone. And yet such a fate can only befall those who delight in Sensation, rather than hunger, as you do, after Truth. Adam's dream will do here, and seems to be a conviction that Imagination and its empyreal reflection is the same as human life and its spiritual repetition. But, as I was saying, the simple imaginative mind may have its rewards in the repetition of its own silent working coming continually on the spirit with a fine suddenness. To compare great things with small,

have you never, by being surprised with an old melody, in a delicious place, by a delicious voice, *felt* over again your very speculations and surmises at the time it first operated on your soul? Do you not remember forming to yourself the singer's face—more beautiful than it was possible, and yet, with the elevation of the moment, you did not think so? Even then you were mounted on the wings of Imagination, so high that the prototype must be hereafter: that delicious face you will see.—Sure this cannot be exactly the ease with a complex mind—one that is imaginative and, at the same time, careful of its fruits,—who would exist partly on sensation, partly on thought,—to whom it is necessary that ‘years should bring the philosophic mind?’ Such an one I consider yours, and therefore it is necessary to your eternal happiness that you not only drink this old wine of Heaven, which I shall call the redigestion of our most ethereal musings on earth, but also increase in knowledge, and know all things.”

This self-drawn picture of the mind, or rather the temperament, of Keats might well inspire painful reflections. If this were a completely true representation, it is evident that those sensuous appetites, and that yearning for enjoyment which has made his poetry the wail and remonstrance of a disinherited Paganism, must ere long have worn away all manliness of character and degenerated into a peevish sentimentalism. But he was preserved from this destiny by the strong presence of counteracting qualities,—unselfish bene-

volence, a sturdy love of right, and that main security and test of moral earnestness, a deep sense of honour. In this spirit he wrote about the same time to his brothers—after asserting that works of genius are the finest things in this world—“No! for that sort of probity and disinterestedness which such men as Bailey possess does hold and grasp the tip-top of any spiritual honours that can be paid to anything in this world. And, moreover, having this feeling at this present come over me in its full force, I sat down to write to you with a grateful heart, in that I had not a brother who did not feel and credit me for a deeper feeling and devotion for his uprightness, than for any marks of genius, however splendid.”

With a great work on hand and in improved health he seems at this time to have enjoyed himself thoroughly. His bodily vigour must have been considerable, for he signalled himself one day by giving a severe drubbing to a butcher whom he caught beating a little boy, to the enthusiastic admiration of a crowd of bystanders. His society was much sought after from the agreeable combination of earnestness and pleasantry, which distinguished him both from graver and gayer men. The good and fine things he said gained much by his happy transitions of manner. His habitual gentleness gave effect to his occasional bursts of indignation, and at the mention of oppression or wrong, or at any calumny against those he loved, he rose into grave manliness at once and seemed like a tall man. On

one occasion when a falsehood respecting the young artist Severn was repeated and dwelt upon, he left the room, saying, "he should be ashamed to sit with men who could utter and believe such things." Another time, hearing of some base conduct, he exclaimed, "Is there no human dust-hole into which we can sweep such fellows?" He used to complain of the usual character of conversation, and said, "If Lord Bacon were alive, and to make a remark in the present day in company, the conversation would stop on a sudden."

To the production of *Endymion*, Keats added some charming compositions in a lighter style, such as the "Lines on the Mermaid Tavern," "Robin Hood," and "Fancy," showing a perfect mastery over the more ordinary and fluent rhythm. His sense of the poetic function evidently grew with his task. He wrote to Mr. Reynolds, "We hate Poetry that has a palpable design upon us, and, if we do not agree, seems to put its hand into its breeches pocket. Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself, but with its subject. How beautiful are the retired flowers! How would they lose their beauty, were they to throng into the highway, crying out, 'Admire me, I am a violet! Dote upon me, I am a primrose!'"

Again, "When man has arrived at a certain ripeness of intellect, any one grand and spiritual passage serves him as a

starting-post towards all 'the two-and-thirty palaces.' How happy is such a voyage of conception, what delicious diligent indolence! A doze upon a sofa does not hinder it, and a nap upon a cushion engenders ethereal finger-pointings; the prattle of a child gives it wings, and the converse of middle-age a strength to beat them; a strain of music conducts to 'an odd angle of the Isle,' and when the leaves whisper, it 'puts a girdle round the earth.' Nor will this sparing touch of noble books be any irreverence to these writers; for, perhaps, the honours paid by man to man are trifles in comparison to the benefit done by great works to the 'spirit and pulse of good' by their mere passive existence. Memory should not be called knowledge. Many have original minds who do not think it: they are led away by custom. Now it appears to me that almost any man may, like the spider, spin from his own inwards, his own airy citadel. The points of leaves and twigs on which the spider begins her work are few, and she fills the air with a beautiful circuiting. Man should be content with as few points to tip with the fine web of his soul, and weave a tapestry empyrean—full of symbols for his spiritual eye, of softness for his spiritual touch, of space for his wandering, of distinctness for his luxury. But the minds of mortals are so different and bent on such diverse journeys, that it may at first appear impossible for any common taste and fellowship to exist between two or three, under those suppositions. It is however quite the contrary. Minds would lead each other in contrary directions, traverse each other in numberless points, and at last greet each other

at the journey's end. An old man and a child would talk together, and the old man be led on his path and the child left thinking. Man should not dispute or assert, but whisper results to his neighbour, and thus by every germ of spirit sucking the sap from mould ethereal, every human being might become great, and humanity, instead of being a wide heath of furze and briars, with here and there a remote oak or pine, would become a grand democracy of forest-trees."

A lady whose feminine acuteness of perception is only equalled by the vigour of her understanding, thus describes Keats as he appeared about this time at Hazlitt's lectures:—"His eyes were large and blue, his hair auburn; he wore it divided down the centre, and it fell in rich masses on each side his face; his mouth was full and less intellectual than his other features. His countenance lives in my mind as one of singular beauty and brightness; it had the expression as if he had been looking on some glorious sight. The shape of his face had not the squareness of a man's, but more like some women's faces I have seen—it was so wide over the forehead and so small at the chin. He seemed in perfect health, and with life offering all things that were precious to him."

The increased ill-health of his brother Tom and the determination of George to emigrate to America cast much gloom over the completion of "Endymion," which was, however, dispersed by a pedestrian tour through Scotland, in the company of Mr. Brown, a retired merchant,

who had been Keats's neighbour during the preceding summer, and whose sympathetic and congenial disposition he had much enjoyed. Mr. Reynolds' objection to a projected Preface provoked the following spirited remonstrance:—

“I have not the slightest feeling of humility towards the public or to anything in existence but the Eternal Being, the Principle of Beauty, and the Memory of great Men. When I am writing for myself, for the mere sake of the moment's enjoyment, perhaps nature has its course with me; but a Preface is written to the public—a thing I cannot help looking upon as an enemy, and which I cannot address without feelings of hostility. If I write a Preface in a supple or subdued style, it will not be in character with me as a public speaker. I would be subdued before my friends, and thank them for subduing me, but among multitudes of men I have no feel of stooping: I hate the idea of humility to them. I never wrote one single line of poetry with the least shadow of public thought. Forgive me for vexing you, and making a Trojan horse of such a trifle, both with respect to the matter in question, and myself; but it eases me to tell you: I could not live without the love of my friends; I would jump down Etna for any great public good, but I hate a mawkish popularity.”

In a fine fragment too, written about this time, he spoke of

“Bards who died content on pleasant sward,  
*Leaving great verse unto a little clan.*  
 O give me their old vigour, and unheard,  
 Save of the quiet Primrose, and the span

Of Heaven and few ears,  
 Rounded by thee, my song should die away  
 Content as theirs,  
*Rich in the simple worship of a day."*

And yet, after all, the Preface which did appear was in the main deprecatory and with no "undersong of disrespect for the public;" and when the Poet looked back on his labour he found it "a feverish attempt rather than a deed accomplished." He said; "the imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy, but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted."

Surely, there was much in this to disarm the violence of the criticism which was levelled at the Poem at its first birth into literary existence. The articles themselves, both in the "Quarterly" and in "Blackwood," were so superficial and coarse, so thoroughly uncritical, that, whatever sensations of disgust and anger they may have aroused at the time, there could hardly have been a question of their permanent influence on the mind and destiny of Keats, but for the belief of many of his friends that they inflicted on his susceptible nature a shock which he never recovered. This notion was confirmed in public estimation by the well-known stanza of the eleventh canto of *Don Juan*; concluding—

"'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,  
 Should let itself be snuffed out by an article."



It is perhaps bold to say in opposition to the testimony of many near and dear friends of Keats, that these effects had no existence, but it is certain they have been greatly exaggerated. The sublime curse hurled at the brutal critic in the "Adonais" of Shelley has its due place in that lofty elegy, but with such means as we have to judge from, with the letters and acts of Keats, immediately after the reviews appeared, before us, his feelings seem to have had much more of indignation and contempt in them than of wounded pride and mortified vanity. I should incline to believe that the little public interest which "Endymion" excited, and the growing sense of his own deficiencies, weighed far more on his mind than those shallow ribaldries, which Jeffrey's article in the Edinburgh Review, if it had appeared somewhat sooner, would have so completely counterbalanced. When told "to go back to his gallipots," just as Simon Peter might have been told to go back to his nets, and when reminded that "a starved apothecary was better than a starved poet," his inclination certainly was rather to call the satirist to account, "if he appears in squares and theatres where we might possibly meet," than to let the scoffing visibly affect his health and spirits. Indeed in a letter to his publisher, after thanking some writer who had vindicated him, he says:—

"As for the rest, I begin to get a little acquainted with my own strength and weakness. Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic on his own works. My

own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what 'Blackwood' or the 'Quarterly' could possibly inflict; and also when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary re-perception and ratification of what is fine. \* \* \* I will write independently. I have written independently *without judgment*, I may write independently, and *with judgment*, hereafter. The genius of poetry must work out its own salvation in a man. It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness in itself. That which is creative must create itself. In 'Endymion' I leaped headlong into the sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and taken tea and comfortable advice." He also wrote to his brother:—"This is a mere matter of the moment. I think I shall be among the English poets after my death. Even as a matter of present interest, the attempt to crush me in the Quarterly has only brought me more into notice. \* \* It does me not the least harm in society to make me appear little and ridiculous. I know when a man is superior to me, and give him all due respect; he will be the last to laugh at me." And again on his birthday:—"The only thing that can ever affect me personally for more than one short passing day, is any doubt about my powers for poetry: I seldom have any; and I look with hope to the nighing time when I shall have none."

After reading these passages it is difficult to see in what

spirit more wise or manly an author could receive unseemly and insolent criticism. When Lord Byron boasts that, after the article on his early poems, "instead of breaking a blood-vessel," he drank three bottles of claret and began an answer, "finding that there was nothing in it for which he could, lawfully, knock Jeffrey on the head, in an honourable way," one is glad of the indignation that produced the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," but the use which Keats made of the annoyance in elevating and purifying his self-judgment is surely far more estimable. The letters show that no morbid feelings prevented him from most heartily enjoying his Scotch tour, where the sublimities of nature met him for the first time. He went to the country of Burns as on a pilgrimage, and notwithstanding that he was shown the cottage of Kirk Alloway "by a mahogany-faced old jackass who knew Burns, and who ought to have been kicked for having spoken to him," he says, "one of the pleasantest means of annulling self is approaching such a shrine: we need not think of his misery—that is all gone, bad luck to it! I shall look upon it hereafter with unmixed pleasure, as I do on my Stratford-on-Avon day with Bailey."

It gave some colour to the belief of the mental injury inflicted on Keats by the reviewers, that after this time his spirits and health began to decline, and the short remainder of his life was exposed to continual troubles and anxieties. His brother Tom, whom he loved most devotedly, and who much

resembled himself in temperament and appearance, died in the autumn, and shortly before this event he met the lady who inspired him with the profound passion which under other circumstances might have combined all his dreams of happiness, but which was destined to increase tenfold the bitterness of his premature decay.\* Up to this period he had been singularly shy of women's society, and frequently expressed himself freely on the subject, as for instance :—

“I am certain I have not a right feeling towards women ; at this moment I am striving to be just to them, but I cannot. Is it because they fall so far beneath my boyish imagination ? When I was a schoolboy, I thought a fair woman a pure goddess ; my mind was a soft nest in which some one of them slept, though she knew it not. I thought them ethereal, above men. I find them perhaps equal—great by comparison is very small. \* \* When among men, I have no evil thoughts, no malice, no spleen ; I feel free to speak or to be silent. I can listen, and from every one I can learn. When I am among women, I have evil thoughts, malice, spleen ; I cannot speak or be silent ; I am full of suspicions, and therefore listen to nothing ; I am in a hurry to be gone. You must be charitable, and put all this perversity to my being disappointed since my boyhood.”

But now his time had come. At a house where he was very intimate, he met a cousin of the family, a lady of East

\* In Keats's copy of Shakspeare, the words *Poor Tom*, in “King Lear,” are pathetically underlined.

Indian connections, who had there found an asylum from some domestic discomfort. He first heard much in her praise, which did not interest him, then something in her dispraise, which took his fancy. He wrote: "She is not a Cleopatra, but is, at least, a Charmian: she has a rich Eastern look: she has fine eyes, and fine manners. When she comes into the room, she makes the same impression as the beauty of a leopardess. She is too fine and too conscious of herself to repulse any man who may address her: from habit she thinks that nothing particular. I always find myself more at ease with such a woman: the picture before me always gives me a life and animation, which I cannot possibly feel with anything inferior. I am, at such times, too much occupied in admiring to be awkward or in a tremble: I forget myself entirely, because I live in her." He then protests that he is not in love with her, but that she kept him awake one night, "as a tune of Mozart's might do." He "won't cry to take the moon home with him in his pocket, nor fret to leave her behind him." And then reverting to his love to his brothers and sisters: "As a man of the world, I love the rich talk of a Charmian; as an eternal being, I love the thought of you. I should like her to ruin me, and I should like you to save me."

Residing in the house of his friend Mr. Brown, and in daily intercourse with this lady, the path of life would have lain out before him brightly indeed, had it not soon appeared that his circumstances were such as to render their

union very difficult, if not impossible. The radiant imagination and the redundant heart now came into fierce conflict with poverty and disease. Hope was there, with Genius his everlasting sustainer, and Fear never approached but as the companion of Necessity: but the intensity of passion helped to wear away a physical frame originally feeble, and he might have lived longer if he had loved less.

Several of the Tales and Odes, which are contained in the volume of miscellaneous poetry, had been written by this time: the "Pot of Basil" before his highland tour, and the "Eve of St. Agnes," and the Odes "to Psyche" and "on Melancholy," in the winter; "Lamia" and the "Ode to Autumn" in the advancing year. In most of these the Spenserian influence is still strongly predominant, augmented no doubt by the study of the Italian Poets, to which, during these months, Keats sedulously applied himself. The fragment of "Hyperion" which Lord Byron, with an exaggeration akin to his former depreciation, declared to "seem actually inspired by the Titans and as sublime as Æschylus," was written so sensibly under another inspiration as to be distasteful to its author. "I have given up Hyperion," he writes, "there were too many Miltonic inversions in it. Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful, or rather, artist's humour." In all these Poems, in their different styles, the progress in purity and grace of diction was manifest. The simplicity of language which had been inaugurated by Goldsmith and Cowper, formalised into a

theory by Wordsworth, and by him and other writers both of the Lake and the London schools carried to extravagance, had been adapted by Keats to a class of subjects to which, according to literary taste and habit, it was especially inappropriate, and where it produced on many minds almost the sensation of a classical burlesque. Such of the Gods as had spoken English up to this time had done so in formal and courtly language, and the familiarity of poetic diction which in any case was novel, here appeared extravagant. Now that *Endymion* has taken its place as a great English Poem, and is in truth become a region of delight in which the youth of every generation finds "a week's stroll in the summer," we can hardly feel the force of those objections, which, if they had been temperately urged by critics who in other matters recognised the genius of Keats, would have had due weight not only with the public but with the Poet himself. But while he owed nothing to the sledge-hammer censure he had endured, his own refined judgment and enlarged knowledge induced him to throw off, as puerilities and conceits, much that had before presented itself to his fancy as invention and simplicity, and to send out his noble thoughts and images so worthily arrayed, that if he had lived to maturity, he would probably have had less of peculiarity and mannerism than any other Poet of his time.

An experiment of double authorship between Keats and his friend Brown was not equally successful: the tragedy of

“Otho the Great” was thus written—Brown supplying the fable, characters, and dramatic conduct; Keats, the diction and the verse. The two composers sat opposite, Brown sketching all the incidents of each scene, and Keats translating them into his rich and ready language. As a literary diversion the process may have been instructive and amusing, but a work of art thus created could be hardly worthy of the name. As the play advanced, Keats thought the events too melodramatic, and concluded the fifth act alone. The tragedy was offered to, and accepted by, Elliston, Kean having expressed a desire to act the principal part; but it is unlikely that even his representation would have carried through a performance so unsuited for the stage. As a literary curiosity it remains interesting, and abounds with fine phrases and passages marred by the poverty of the construction. It is doubtful whether at this time Keats alone could have produced a much better play: he might have written a *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, as Coleridge might have written a *Hamlet*, but in both the great human element would have been wanting, which Shakspeare combines with high philosophy or with fairy-land.

George Keats paid a short visit to England in the early part of this year and received his share of the property of the youngest brother. He probably repaid himself for moneys advanced for John’s education or liabilities, and thus the share which John received was not above 200*l*. By this time little, if anything, remained of John’s original fortune, and



it is deeply to be regretted that the more enterprising brother did not come to some distinct understanding with the other, before he finally quitted England, as to John's future means of support. Keats's friends believed that George took with him some remnants of John's fortune to speculate with, but no proof of this remains in any of the letters on either side; and, after John's death, when the legal administration of his effects showed that no debts were owing to the estate, George offered, without any obligation, to do his utmost to discharge his brother's engagements.

At the time when these embarrassments began to press most heavily on Keats, he returned one night late to Hampstead in a state of strange physical excitement, like violent intoxication: he told his friend he had been outside the stage-coach and received a severe chill, but added, "I don't feel it now." Getting into bed, he slightly coughed, and said, "That is blood—bring me the candle," and after gazing on the pillow, turning round with an expression of sudden and solemn calm, said, "I know the colour of that blood, it is arterial blood,—I cannot be deceived in that colour; that drop is my death-warrant. I must die." He was bled, fell asleep, and, after some weeks, apparently recovered. During his illness he told Mr. Brown, "If you would have me recover, flatter me with a hope of happiness when I shall be well; for I am now so weak that I can be flattered into hope." When he said one day, "Look at my hand, it is

that of a man 'of fifty," it was remembered that years before, Coleridge meeting Keats in a lane near Highgate, and shaking hands with him, had turned round to Mr. Hunt and whispered, 'There is death in that hand.'

This illness seemed at the time not to be without its compensations: he wrote to Mr. Riee in Feb. (1820):—

“For six months before I was taken ill, I had not passed a tranquil day. Either that gloom overspread me, or I was suffering under some passionate feeling, or, if I turned to versify, that acerbated the poison of either sensation. The beauties of nature had lost their power over me. How astonishingly (here I must premise that illness, as far as I can judge in so short a time, has relieved my mind of a load of deceptive thoughts and images, and makes me perceive things in a truer light),—how astonishingly does the chance of leaving the world impress a sense of its natural beauties upon us! Like poor Falstaff, though I do not ‘babble,’ I think of green fields; I muse with the greatest affection on every flower I have known from my infancy; their shapes and colours are as new to me as if I had just created them with a superhuman fancy. It is because they are connected with the most thoughtless and happiest moments of our lives. I have seen foreign flowers in hothouses, of the most beautiful nature, but I do not care a straw for them. The simple flowers of our Spring are what I want to see again.”

And he saw them—for towards the end of the spring his

health was apparently so much better that the physician recommended another tour in Scotland. Mr. Brown, however thought him unfit for the exertion and went alone: the two friends parted in May and never met again. In the previous autumn Keats had removed to a lodging in Westminster, when he was trying to make some money by contributing to periodical works, but soon found he had miscalculated his own powers of endurance. She, whose name

"Was ever on his lip  
But never on his tongue,"

exercised too mighty a restraint over his being for him to remain at a distance which was neither absence nor presence, and he soon returned to where at least he could rest his eyes on her habitation, and enjoy each chance opportunity of her society. After Mr. Brown's departure, he seems to have been all but domesticated with her family for a short time, but with the sad consciousness of the absolute necessity of some great change of life to ward off absolute destitution. "My mind," he writes, "has been at work all over the world to find out what to do. I have my choice of three things or, at least, two—South America, or surgeon to an Indiaman, which last, I think, will be my fate. I shall resolve in a few days."

It was probably this pressure which forced him, against his will, to publish the volume of Tales and Poems, which seemed at last to move even the literary world to some consciousness of his merits. It had no great sale, but it

was received respectfully, and, even without the catastrophe that soon invested it with so solemn an interest, it would have gone far to establish him as a poet even in vulgar fame. During its completion he had spent much time on an Ariosto-like Poem, which he called the "Cap and Bells," exhibiting his play of fancy to great advantage, and getting away as it were, as far as possible, from the gross realities that occupied and tormented his existence. His main passion finds no place in his verse; a few, and not eminent, fragments betray the haunting thought, but the careful exclusion of the topic from his literature adds one more testimony to the truth that the highest poetry exhibits itself in objective forms, moulded and coloured by the feelings and experiences of the writer, and not in subjective representations of his immediate and perhaps temporary sensations.

Keats thought himself to be slowly but surely recovering, when a spitting of blood came on, followed by tightness of the chest and other symptoms, which made it apparent that nothing but a winter in a milder climate would have a chance of saving his life. It is sad to contemplate with what delight, under other auspices, he would have undertaken a visit to those southern lands, the favourites of nature, still tenanted by those mythologic presences of beauty which he had so peculiarly made his own. Now he writes, "the journey to Italy wakes me at daylight every morning, and haunts me horribly. I shall endeavour to go,

though it be with the sensation of marching up against a battery." He felt he had a "core of disease in him not easy to pull out," and he had no sufficient hope of ultimate good to remedy the pangs of present separation. He had been tended for a few weeks by the one hand that could soothe him, and that he must leave, perhaps for ever. And he would have had to go alone but for the affection of Mr. Severn, the young artist, who had just won the gold medal given by the Royal Academy for historical painting which had not been adjudged for the last twelve years. Regardless of personal and professional advantages the painter devoted himself to the afflicted poet, and they started in the middle of September by sea. When scarcely embarked, Keats wrote despondingly to Mr. Brown, taking that opportunity of ease, "for time seems to press." He wishes to write on subjects that would not agitate him, and yet he is ever recurring to that which wears his heart away.

"If my body would recover of itself, this would prevent it; the very thing which I want to live most for will be a great occasion of my death. \* \* I wish for death every day and night to deliver me from these pains, and then I wish death away, for death would destroy even those pains, which are better than nothing. Land and sea, weakness and decline, are great separators, but death is the great divorcer for ever. When the pang of this thought has passed through my mind, I may say the bitterness of death

is passed. \* \* I am in a state at present in which woman, merely as woman, can have no more power over me than stocks and stones, and yet the difference of my sensations with respect to Miss —— and my sister is amazing: the one seems to absorb the other to a degree incredible. I seldom think of my brother and sister in America; the thought of leaving Miss —— is beyond everything horrible—the sense of darkness coming over me—I eternally see her figure eternally vanishing.”

At Naples the gloom grows still darker, and we feel that the night is at hand.

“The fresh air revived me a little, and I hope I am well enough this morning to write you a short calm letter—if that can be called one, in which I am afraid to speak of what I would fainest dwell upon. As I have gone thus far into it, I must go on a little—perhaps it may relieve the load of *wretchedness* which presses upon me. The persuasion that I shall see her no more will kill me. My dear Brown, I should have had her when I was in health, and I should have remained well. I can bear to die—I cannot bear to leave her. Oh, God! God! God! Everything I have in my trunks that reminds me of her goes through me like a spear. The silk lining she put in my travelling-cap scalds my head. My imagination is horribly vivid about her—I see her—I hear her. There is nothing in the world of sufficient interest to divert me from her a moment. This was the case when I

was in England. I cannot recollect, without shuddering, the time that I was a prisoner at Hunt's and used to keep my eyes fixed on Hampstead all day. Then there was a good hope of seeing her again—Now!—O that I could be buried near where she lives. \* \* \* Is there any news of George? O, that something fortunate had ever happened to me or my brothers! then I might hope, but despair is forced upon me as a habit. My dear Brown, for my sake, be her advocate for ever. I cannot say a word about Naples; I do not feel at all concerned in the thousand novelties around me. I am afraid to write to her. I should like her to know that I do not forget her. Oh! Brown, I have coals of fire in my breast. It surprises me that the human heart is capable of containing and bearing so much misery. Was I born for this end?"

He received at Naples a most affectionate letter from Mr. Shelley urging him to come to Pisa, where he would receive every comfort and attention. After the many annoyances he encountered at Rome, one almost regrets that he did not accept this offer, except that at Pisa he could not have experienced the skilful solicitude of Dr. (now Sir James) Clark, which led him through the dark passages of mortal sickness with every alleviation that medical care and knowledge could bestow. It was thus alone that his life was preserved during December and January. On the last day of November he wrote his last letter,—in a tone of mind somewhat less painful. He spoke of his real

life as something passed, and as if he were leading a posthumous existence. It ends with these words:—  
 “If I recover, I will do all in my power to correct the mistakes made during sickness, and, if I should not, all my faults will be forgiven. Write to George as soon as you receive this, and tell him how I am, as far as you can guess; and also a note to my sister—who walks about my imagination like a ghost—she is so like Tom. I can scarcely bid you good-bye, even in a letter. I always made an awkward bow. God bless you.

“JOHN KEATS.”

After some weeks of acute physical suffering and of a fierce mental conflict with destiny, in which reason itself was, at times, overcome, he became calm and resigned; he talked easily and slept peacefully. To Severn, who, to use his own phrase “had been beating about so long in the tempest of his friend’s mind,” this change was most welcome, although conscious that it was rather owing to the increasing debility of his body, than to any real improvement of his condition. He desired a letter from his beloved, which he did not dare to read, together with a purse and letter of his sister’s\* to be placed in his coffin, and that on his grave should be written these words:—

HERE LIES ONE WHOSE NAME WAS WRIT IN WATER.

\* Miss Keats shortly afterwards married Señor Llaños, the author of “Don Esteban,” “Sandoval the Freemason,” and other works of considerable ability.



He died on the 27th of February, so quiet that Severn thought he still slept; his last words were "Thank God it has come."

Keats was buried in the Protestant cemetery at Rome, one of the most beautiful spots on which the eye and heart of man can rest. It is a grassy slope, amid verdurous ruins of the Honorian walls of the diminished city, surmounted by the pyramidal tomb which Petrarch ascribed to Remus, but which antiquarian research has attributed to the humbler name of Caius Cestius, a Tribune of the people, only remembered by his sepulchre. In one of these mental voyages into the past, which precede death, Keats had told Severn that he thought "the intensest pleasure he had received in life was in watching the growth of flowers," and another time, after lying a while quite still, he murmured, "I feel the flowers growing over me." And there they do grow even all the winter long,—violets and daisies mingling with the fresh herbage, and in the words of Shelley "making one in love with death, to think one should be buried in so sweet a place." Some years ago, when the writer of this memoir was at Rome, the thick grass had nearly overgrown the humble tomb-stone, which however few strangers of our race omit to visit; but whether this record of him escapes the wreck of years or not, there will remain, as long as the English language lasts, and be read, as far as it extends, the glorious monument, erected by the living genius of Shelley, the *Elegy of Adonais*. Nor will it be forgotten, how few

years afterwards, in the extended burying-ground, a little above the grave of Keats, was placed another stone, recording that below rests the passionate and world-worn heart of Shelley himself—"Cor Cordium."\*

The thoughtful reader will hardly consider this biographical sketch, personal as it is, without its worth in estimating the due position of these Poems in the history of British literature. By common consent, the individuality of the Poet enters more directly into the consideration of his works than that of a writer in any other mental field. That these Poems should be the productions of a young surgeon's apprentice, with no more opportunities of study and reflection than belonged to the general middle class of his time and country, is in itself a psychological wonder, only to be paralleled by the phenomenon of Chatterton. While this reflection enhances the originality and palliates the defects of the earlier works of Keats, the picture of that sympathetic temper and genial disposition, which led his imagination to a novel and unscholastic treatment of classical tradition, and made him labour to realise a world of love and beauty in which his heart found itself most at home, would induce us to ascribe to the morose nature and lonely pride of Bristol's prodigy much of the misdirection of the rarest talents, and many otherwise undeserved calamities. And, when in pursuing the course of the later Poet we find

\* The words on the stone.

him too the victim of critical contempt, haunted by pressing poverty, struck with acute physical suffering, and blighted in his deepest affections, and yet, with a genius above fate, rectifying and purifying his powers to the very last, our personal interest identifies itself with our literary admiration, and we better appreciate the merit of the poet by understanding the nobility of the man. It is not indeed that he was notably one of those who "are cradled into poetry by wrong," and "learn in suffering what they teach in song," for his temperament demanded happiness for its atmosphere, and pleasure expanded without ever tating his powers; but, it was perhaps required, for the vindication of his nature from the charge of sentimental sensuality and unmanly dependence, that he should be thus severely tried, and that the simple story of his life and death should be the refutation of those who knowingly calumniated, or unconsciously misapprehended him.

The works of Keats have now sustained, in some degree, the test of time; his generation, fertile in poetical ability, has passed away, and a fair comparison may be instituted among its competitors for fame. Without entering on a question of so much intricacy, it cannot be denied that these Poems are read by every accurate student of English literature. It is natural that the young should find especial delight in productions which take so much of their inspiration from the exuberant vitality of the author and of the world. But the eternal youth of antique beauty does not

confine its influences to any portion of the life of man. And thus the admiration of the writings of Keats survives the hot impulses of early years, and these pages often remain open, when the clamorous sublimities of Byron and Shelley come to be unwelcome intruders on the calm of maturer age. To these and such voices the poetic sense still listens, and will listen ever, in preference to more instructive harmonies; and the fancy recognises in the unaccomplished promise of this wonderful boy, a symbol of that old world, where the perfect physical organisation of man and the perfect type of ideal beauty may seem to have been crushed and obliterated by barbarian hands, but which perished, in truth, because these very aspirations could only be realised in another and still more glorious order of the universe.



ENDYMION:

A POETIC ROMANCE.

INSCRIBED TO

THE MEMORY OF THOMAS CHATTERTON.



THE STRETCHED METRE OF AN ANTIQUE SONG.





## PREFACE.

KNOWING within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good;—it will not: the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination

of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness: for I wish to try once more before I bid it farewell.

TEIGNMOUTH, *April 10, 1818.*







## ENDYMION.

### BOOK I.

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever :  
Its loveliness increases ; it will never  
Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.



Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing  
 A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
 Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth  
 Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
 Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darken'd ways  
 Made for our searching : yes, in spite of all,  
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,  
 Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon  
 For simple sheep ; and such are daffodils  
 With the green world they live in ; and clear rills  
 That for themselves a cooling covert make  
 'Gainst the hot season ; the mid-forest brake,  
 Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms :  
 And such too is the grandeur of the dooms  
 We have imagined for the mighty dead ;  
 All lovely tales that we have heard or read :  
 An endless fountain of immortal drink,  
 Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences  
 For one short hour ; no, even as the trees  
 That whisper round a temple become soon  
 Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,  
 The passion poesy, glories infinite,  
 Haunt us till they become a cheering light  
 Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,  
 That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,  
 They always must be with us, or we die.

Therefore, 'tis with full happiness that I  
 Will trace the story of Endymion.

The very music of the name has gone  
Into my being, and each pleasant scene  
Is growing fresh before me as the green  
Of our own valleys : so I will begin  
Now while I cannot hear the city's din ;  
Now while the early budders are just new,  
And run in mazes of the youngest hue  
About old forests ; while the willow trails  
Its delicate amber ; and the dairy pails  
Bring home increase of milk. And, as the year  
Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer  
My little boat, for many quiet hours,  
With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.  
Many and many a verse I hope to write,  
Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white,  
Hide in deep herbage ; and ere yet the bees  
Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,  
I must be near the middle of my story.  
O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,  
See it half-finish'd : but let Autumn bold,  
With universal tinge of sober gold,  
Be all about me when I make an end.  
And now at once, adventuresome, I send  
My herald thought into a wilderness :  
There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress  
My uncertain path with green, that I may speed  
Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed.

Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread  
A mighty forest : for the moist earth fed  
So plenteously all weed-hidden roots  
Into o'erhanging boughs, and precious fruits.

And it had gloomy shades, sequester'd deep,  
 Where no man went ; and if from shepherd's keep  
 A lamb stray'd far a-down those inmost glens,  
 Never again saw he the happy pens  
 Whither his brethren, bleating with content,  
 Over the hills at every nightfall went.  
 Among the shepherds 'twas believed ever,  
 That not one fleecy lamb which thus did sever  
 From the white flock, but pass'd unworried  
 By any wolf, or pard with prying head,  
 Until it came to some unfooted plains  
 Where fed the herds of Pan : ay, great his gains  
 Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there were many,  
 Winding through palmy fern, and rushes fenny,  
 And ivy banks ; all leading pleasantly  
 To a wide lawn, whence one could only see  
 Stems thronging all around between the swell  
 Of tuft and slanting branches : who could tell  
 The freshness of the space of heaven above,  
 Edged round with dark tree-tops ? through which a dove  
 Would often beat its wings, and often too  
 A little cloud would move across the blue.

Full in the middle of this pleasantness  
 There stood a marble altar, with a tress  
 Of flowers budded newly ; and the dew  
 Had taken fairy phantasies to strew  
 Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,  
 And so the dawned light in pomp receive.  
 For 'twas the morn : Apollo's upward fire  
 Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre  
 Of brightness so unsullied, that therein

A melancholy spirit well might win  
 Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine  
 Into the winds : rain-scented eglantine  
 Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing sun :  
 The lark was lost in him : cold springs had run



To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass ;  
 Man's voice was on the mountains ; and the mass  
 Of nature's lives and wonders pulsed tenfold,  
 To feel this sun-rise and its glories old.

Now while the silent workings of the dawn

Were busiest, into that self-same lawn  
 All suddenly, with joyful cries, there sped  
 A troop of little children garlanded ;  
 Who gathering round the altar, seem'd to pry  
 Earnestly round as wishing to espy  
 Some folk of holiday : nor had they waited  
 For many moments, ere their ears were sated  
 With a faint breath of music, which even then  
 Fill'd out its voice, and died away again.  
 Within a little space again it gave  
 Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,  
 To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes breaking  
 Through copse-clad valleys,—ere their death, o'ertaking  
 The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea.

And now, as deep into the wood as we  
 Might mark a lynx's eye, there glimmer'd light  
 Fair faces and a rush of garments white,  
 Plainer and plainer showing, till at last  
 Into the widest alley they all past,  
 Making directly for the woodland altar.  
 O kindly muse ! let not my weak tongue falter  
 In telling of this goodly company,  
 Of their old piety, and of their glee :  
 But let a portion of ethereal dew  
 Fall on my head, and presently unmew  
 My soul ; that I may dare, in wayfaring,  
 To stammer where old Chaucer used to sing.

Leading the way, young damsels danced along,  
 Bearing the burden of a shepherd's song :  
 Each having a white wicker, overbrimm'd

With April's tender younglings : next, well trimm'd,  
A crowd of shepherds with as sunburnt looks  
As may be read of in Arcadian books :  
Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe.  
When the great deity, for earth too ripe,  
Let his divinity o'erflowing die  
In music, through the vales of Thessaly :  
Some idly trail'd their sheep-hooks on the ground,  
And some kept up a shrilly mellow sound  
With ebon-tipped flutes : close after these,  
Now coming from beneath the forest trees,  
A venerable priest full soberly,  
Begirt with ministering looks : always his eye  
Steadfast upon the matted turf he kept,  
And after him his sacred vestments swept.  
From his right hand there swung a vase, milk-white,  
Of mingled wine, out-sparkling generous light ;  
And in his left he held a basket full  
Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull :  
Wild thyme, and valley-lilies whiter still  
Than Leda's love, and cresses from the rill.  
His aged head, crowned with beechen wreath,  
Seem'd like a poll of ivy in the teeth  
Of winter hoar. Then came another crowd  
Of shepherds, lifting in due time aloud  
Their share of the ditty. After them appear'd,  
Up-follow'd by a multitude that rear'd  
Their voices to the clouds, a fair-wrought car  
Easily rolling so as scarce to mar  
The freedom of three steeds of dapple brown :  
Who stood therein did seem of great renown  
Among the throng. His youth was fully blown,

Showing like Ganymede to manhood grown ;  
And, for those simple times, his garments were  
A chieftain king's : beneath his breast, half bare,  
Was hung a silver bugle, and between  
His nery knees there lay a boar-spear keen.  
A smile was on his countenance ; he seem'd  
To common lookers-on, like one who dream'd  
Of idleness in groves Elysian :  
But there were some who feelingly could scan  
A lurking trouble in his nether lip,  
And see that oftentimes the reins would slip  
Through his forgotten hands : then would they sigh,  
And think of yellow leaves, of owlets' cry,  
Of logs piled solemnly.—Ah, well-a-day,  
Why should our young Endymion pine away !

Soon the assembly, in a circle ranged,  
Stood silent round the shrine : each look was changed  
To sudden veneration : women meek  
Beckon'd their sons to silence ; while each cheek  
Of virgin bloom paled gently for slight fear.  
Endymion too, without a forest peer,  
Stood, wan, and pale, and with an awed face,  
Among his brothers of the mountain chase.  
In midst of all, the venerable priest  
Eyed them with joy from greatest to the least,  
And, after lifting up his aged hands,  
Thus spake he : “ Men of Latmos ! shepherd bands !  
Whose care it is to guard a thousand flocks :  
Whether descended from beneath the rocks  
That overtop your mountains ; whether come  
From valleys where the pipe is never dumb ;



Or from your swelling downs, where sweet air stirs  
Blue hare-bells lightly, and where prickly furze  
Buds lavish gold; or ye, whose precious charge  
Nibble their fill at ocean's very marge,  
Whose mellow reeds are touch'd with sounds forlorn  
By the dim echoes of old Triton's horn:  
Mothers and wives! who day by day prepare  
The scrip, with needments, for the mountain air:  
And all ye gentle girls who foster up  
Udderless lambs, and in a little cup  
Will put choice honey for a favour'd youth:  
Yea, every one attend! for in good truth  
Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.  
Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than  
Night-swollen mushrooms? Are not our wide plains  
Speckled with countless fleeces? Have not rains  
Green'd over April's lap? No howling sad  
Sickens our fearful ewes; and we have had  
Great bounty from Endymion our lord.  
The earth is glad: the merry lark has pour'd  
His early song against you breezy sky,  
That spreads so clear o'er our solemnity."

Thus ending, on the shrine he heap'd a spire  
Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire;  
Anon he stain'd the thick and spongy sod  
With wine, in honour of the shepherd-god.  
Now while the earth was drinking it, and while  
Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant pile,  
And gummy frankincense was sparkling bright  
'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy light  
Spread greyly eastward, thus a chorus sang:

“ O thou, whose mighty palace roof doth hang  
 From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth  
 Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death  
 Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness ;  
 Who lovest to see the hamadryads dress  
 Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken ;  
 And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken  
 The dreary melody of bedded reeds—  
 In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds  
 The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth,  
 Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth  
 Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx—do thou now,  
 By thy love’s milky brow !  
 By all the trembling mazes that she ran,  
 Hear us, great Pan !

“ O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles  
 Passion their voices cooingly ’mong myrtles,  
 What time thou wanderest at eventide  
 Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side  
 Of thine enmossed realms : O thou, to whom  
 Broad-leaved fig-trees even now foredoom  
 Their ripen’d fruitage ; yellow-girted bees  
 Their golden honeycombs ; our village leas  
 Their fairest blossom’d beans and popped corn ;  
 The chuckling linnet its five young unborn,  
 To sing for thee ; low-creeping strawberries  
 Their summer coolness ; pent-up butterflies  
 Their freckled wings ; yea, the fresh-budding year  
 All its completions—be quickly near,  
 By every wind that nods the mountain pine,  
 O forester divine !

“Thou, to whom every faun and satyr flies  
For willing service; whether to surprise  
The squatted hare while in half-sleeping fit:  
Or upward ragged precipices flit  
To save poor lambkins from the eagle’s maw;  
Or by mysterious enticement draw  
Bewilder’d shepherds to their path again;  
Or to tread breathless round the frothy main,  
And gather up all fancifullest shells  
For thee to tumble into Naiads’ cells,  
And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peeping;  
Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,  
The while they pelt each other on the crown  
With silvery oak-apples, and fir-cones brown—  
By all the echoes that about thee ring,  
Hear us, O satyr king!

“O Hearer to the loud-clapping shears,  
While ever and anon to his shorn peers  
A ram goes bleating: Winder of the horn,  
When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn  
Anger our huntsman: Breather round our farms,  
To keep off mildews, and all weather harms:  
Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds,  
That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,  
And wither drearily on barren moors:  
Dread opener of the mysterious doors  
Leading to universal knowledge—see,  
Great son of Dryope,  
The many that are come to pay their vows  
With leaves about their brows!

" Be still the unimaginable lodge  
 For solitary thinkings ; such as dodge  
 Conception to the very bourne of heaven,  
 Then leave the naked brain : be still the leaven,  
 That spreading in this dull and clodded earth,  
 Gives it a touch ethereal—a new birth :  
 Be still a symbol of immensity :  
 A firmament reflected in a sea ;  
 An element filling the space between ;  
 An unknown—but no more : we humbly screen  
 With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,  
 And giving out a shout most heaven-rending,  
 Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan,  
 Upon thy Mount Lycean ! "

Even while they brought the burden to a close,  
 A shout from the whole multitude arose,  
 That linger'd in the air like dying rolls  
 Of abrupt thunder, when Ionian shoals  
 Of dolphins bob their noses through the brine.  
 Meantime, on shady levels, mossy fine,  
 Young companies nimbly began dancing  
 To the swift treble pipe, and humming string.  
 Ay, those fair living forms swam heavenly  
 To tunes forgotten—out of memory :  
 Fair creatures ! whose young children's children bred  
 Thermopylæ its heroes—not yet dead,  
 But in old marbles ever beautiful.  
 High genitors, unconscious did they cull  
 Time's sweet first-fruits—they danced to weariness,  
 And then in quiet circles did they press  
 The hillock turf, and caught the latter end

Of some strange history, potent to send  
A young mind from its bodily tenement.  
Or they might watch the quoit-pitchers, intent  
On either side; pitying the sad death  
Of Hyacinthus, when the cruel breath  
Of Zephyr slew him,—Zephyr penitent,  
Who now, ere Phœbus mounts the firmament,  
Fondles the flower amid the sobbing rain.  
The archers too, upon a wider plain,  
Beside the feathery whizzing of the shaft,  
And the dull twanging bowstring, and the raft  
Branch down sweeping from a tall ash top.  
Call'd up a thousand thoughts to envelope  
Those who would watch. Perhaps, the trembling knee  
And frantic gape of lonely Niobe,  
Poor, lonely Niobe! when her lovely young  
Were dead and gone, and her caressing tongue  
Lay a lost thing upon her paly lip,  
And very, very deadliness did nip  
Her motherly cheeks. Aroused from this sad mood  
By one, who at a distance loud halloo'd,  
Uplifting his strong bow into the air,  
Many might after brighter visions stare:  
After the Argonauts, in blind amaze  
Tossing about on Neptune's restless ways.  
Until, from the horizon's vaulted side,  
There shot a golden splendour far and wide,  
Spangling those million poutings of the brine  
With quivering ore: 'twas even an awful shine  
From the exaltation of Apollo's bow;  
A heavenly beacon in their dreary woe.  
Who thus were ripe for high contemplating,

Might turn their steps towards the sober ring  
Where sat Endymion and the aged priest  
'Mong shepherds gone in eld, whose looks increased  
The silvery setting of their mortal star.  
There they discoursed upon the fragile bar  
That keeps us from our homes ethereal ;  
And what our duties there : to nightly call  
Vesper, the beauty-crest of summer weather ;  
To summon all the downiest clouds together  
For the sun's purple couch ; to emulate  
In ministering the potent rule of fate  
With speed of fire-tail'd exhalations ;  
To tint her pallid cheek with bloom, who cons  
Sweet poesy by moonlight : besides these,  
A world of other unguess'd offices.  
Anon they wander'd, by divine converse,  
Into Elysium ; vying to rehearse  
Each one his own anticipated bliss.  
One felt heart-certain that he could not miss  
His quick-gone love, among fair blossom'd boughs,  
Where every zephyr-sigh pouts, and endows  
Her lips with music for the welcoming.  
Another wish'd, 'mid that eternal spring,  
To meet his rosy child, with feathery sails,  
Sweeping, eye-earnestly, through almond vales :  
Who, suddenly, should stoop through the smooth wind,  
And with the balmiest leaves his temples bind ;  
And, ever after, through those regions be  
His messenger, his little Mereury.  
Some were athirst in soul to see again  
Their fellow-huntsmen o'er the wide champaign  
In times long past ; to sit with them, and talk

Of all the chances in their earthly walk :  
 Comparing, joyfully, their plenteous stores  
 Of happiness, to when upon the moors,  
 Benighted, close they huddled from the cold,  
 And shared their famish'd scrips. Thus all out-told  
 Their fond imaginations,—saving him  
 Whose eyelids curtain'd up their jewels dim.  
 Endymion : yet hourly had he striven  
 To hide the cankering venom, that had riven  
 His fainting recollections. Now indeed  
 His senses had swoon'd off: he did not heed  
 The sudden silence, or the whispers low,  
 Or the old eyes dissolving at his woe,  
 Or anxious calls, or close of trembling palms.  
 Or maiden's sigh, that grief itself embalms :  
 But in the self-same fixed trance he kept,  
 Like one who on the earth had never stept.  
 Ay, even as dead-still as a marble man,  
 Frozen in that old tale Arabian.

Who whispers him so pantingly and close ?  
 Peona, his sweet sister : of all those,  
 His friends, the dearest. Hushing signs she made,  
 And breathed a sister's sorrow to persuade  
 A yielding up, a cradling on her care.  
 Her eloquence did breathe away the curse :  
 She led him, like some midnight spirit nurse  
 Of happy changes in emphatic dreams,  
 Along a path between two little streams.—  
 Guarding his forehead, with her round elbow.  
 From low-grown branches, and his footsteps slow  
 From stumbling over stumps and hillocks small :

Until they came to where these streamlets fall,  
With mingled bubblings and a gentle rush,  
Into a river, clear, brimful, and flush  
With crystal mocking of the trees and sky.  
A little shallop, floating there hard by,  
Pointed its beak over the fringed bank ;  
And soon it lightly dipt, and rose, and sank,



And dipt again, with the young couple's weight,—  
Peona guiding, through the water straight,  
Towards a bowery island opposite ;  
Which gaining presently, she steered light  
Into a shady, fresh, and ripply cove,  
Where nested was an arbour, overwove  
By many a summer's silent fugging ;  
To whose cool bosom she was used to bring  
Her playmates, with their needle broidery,  
And minstrel memories of times gone by.



So she was gently glad to see him laid  
Under her favourite bower's quiet shade,  
On her own couch, new made of flower leaves,  
Dried carefully on the cooler side of sheaves  
When last the sun his autumn tresses shook.  
And the tann'd harvesters rich armfuls took.  
Soon was he quieted to slumbrous rest :  
But, ere it crept upon him, he had prest  
Peona's busy hand against his lips,  
And still, a-sleeping, held her finger-tips  
In tender pressure. And as a willow keeps  
A patient watch over the stream that creeps  
Windingly by it, so the quiet maid  
Held her in peace : so that a whispering blade  
Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee bustling  
Down in the blue-bells, or a wren light rustling  
Among sere leaves and twigs, might all be heard.

O magic sleep ! O comfortable bird,  
That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind  
Till it is hush'd and smooth ! O unconfined  
Restraint ! imprison'd liberty ! great key  
To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,  
Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,  
Echoing grottoes, full of tumbling waves  
And moonlight : ay, to all the mazy world  
Of silvery enchantment !—who, upfurl'd  
Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,  
But renovates and lives ?—Thus, in the bower,  
Endymion was calm'd to life again.  
Opening his eyelids with a healthier brain,  
He said : “ I feel this thine endearing love

All through my bosom : thou art as a dove  
 Trembling its closed eyes and sleeked wings  
 About me ; and the pearliest dew not brings  
 Such morning incense from the fields of May,  
 As do those brighter drops that twinkling stray  
 From those kind eyes,—the very home and haunt  
 Of sisterly affection. Can I want  
 Aught else, aught nearer heaven, than such tears ?  
 Yet dry them up, in bidding hence all fears  
 That, any longer, I will pass my days  
 Alone and sad. No, I will once more raise  
 My voice upon the mountain-heights ; once more  
 Make my horn parley from their foreheads hoar :  
 Again my trooping hounds their tongues shall loll  
 Around the breathed boar : again I'll poll  
 The fair-grown yew-tree, for a chosen bow :  
 And, when the pleasant sun is getting low,  
 Again I'll linger in a sloping mead  
 To hear the speckled thrushes, and see feed  
 Our idle sheep. So be thou cheered, sweet !  
 And, if thy lute is here, softly entreat  
 My soul to keep in its resolved course."

Hereat Peona, in their silver source,  
 Shut her pure sorrow-drops with glad exclaim,  
 And took a lute, from which there pulsing came  
 A lively prelude, fashioning the way  
 In which her voice should wander. 'Twas a lay  
 More subtle-cadenced, more forest wild  
 Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child ;  
 And nothing since has floated in the air  
 So mournful strange. Surely some influence rare

Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand :  
 For still, with Delphic emphasis, she spann'd  
 The quick invisible strings, even though she saw  
 Endymion's spirit melt away and thaw  
 Before the deep intoxication.  
 But soon she came, with sudden burst, upon  
 Her self-possession—swung the lute aside,  
 And earnestly said : “ Brother, 'tis vain to hide  
 That thou dost know of things mysterious,  
 Immortal, starry ; such alone could thus  
 Weigh down thy nature. Hast thou sinn'd in aught  
 Offensive to the heavenly powers ? Caught  
 A Paphian dove upon a message sent ?  
 Thy deathful bow against some deer-herd bent,  
 Sacred to Dian ? Haply, thou hast seen  
 Her naked limbs among the alders green ;  
 And that, alas ! is death. No, I can trace  
 Something more high perplexing in thy face ! ”

Endymion look'd at her, and press'd her hand,  
 And said, “ Art thou so pale, who wast so bland  
 And merry in our meadows ? How is this ?  
 Tell me thine ailment : tell me all amiss !  
 Ah ! thou hast been unhappy at the change  
 Wrought suddenly in me. What indeed more strange ?  
 Or more complete to overwhelm surmise ?  
 Ambition is no sluggard : 'tis no prize,  
 That toiling years would put within my grasp,  
 That I have sigh'd for : with so deadly gasp  
 No man e'er panted for a mortal love.  
 So all have set my heavier grief above  
 These things which happen. Rightly have they done :

I, who still saw the horizontal sun  
Heave his broad shoulder o'er the edge of the world,  
Out-facing Lucifer, and then had hurl'd  
My spear aloft, as signal for the chase—  
I, who, for very sport of heart, would race  
With my own steed from Araby; pluck down  
A vulture from his towery perching; frown  
A lion into growling, loth retire—  
To lose, at once, all my toil-breeding fire,  
And sink thus low! but I will ease my breast  
Of secret grief, here in this bowery nest.

“This river does not see the naked sky,  
Till it begins to progress silverly  
Around the western border of the wood,  
Whence, from a certain spot, its winding flood  
Seems at the distance like a crescent moon:  
And in that nook, the very pride of June,  
Had I been used to pass my weary eyes;  
The rather for the sun unwilling leaves  
So dear a picture of his sovereign power,  
And I could witness his most kingly hour,  
When he doth tighten up the golden reins,  
And paces leisurely down amber plains  
His snorting four. Now when his chariot last  
Its beams against the zodiac-lion cast,  
There blossom'd suddenly a magic bed  
Of sacred dittany, and poppies red:  
At which I wonder'd greatly, knowing well  
That but one night had wrought this flowery spell;  
And, sitting down close by, began to muse  
What it might mean. Perhaps, thought I, Morpheus,

In passing here, his owlet pinions shook :  
Or, it may be, ere matron Night uptook  
Her ebon urn, young Mercury, by stealth,  
Had dipp'd his rod in it : such garland wealth  
Came not by common growth. Thus on I thought,  
Until my head was dizzy and distraught.  
Moreover, through the dancing poppies stole  
A breeze most softly lulling to my soul ;  
And shaping visions all about my sight  
Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly light ;  
The which became more strange, and strange, and dim,  
And then were gulf'd in a tumultuous swim :  
And then I fell asleep. Ah, can I tell  
The enchantment that afterwards befel ?  
Yet it was but a dream : yet such a dream  
That never tongue, although it overteem  
With mellow utterance, like a cavern spring,  
Could figure out and to conception bring  
All I beheld and felt. Methought I lay  
Watching the zenith, where the milky way  
Among the stars in virgin splendour pours ;  
And travelling my eye, until the doors  
Of heaven appear'd to open for my flight,  
I became loth and fearful to alight  
From such high soaring by a downward glance :  
So kept me stedfast in that airy trance.  
Spreading imaginary pinions wide.  
When, presently, the stars began to glide,  
And faint away, before my eager view :  
At which I sigh'd that I could not pursue,  
And dropp'd my vision to the horizon's verge ;  
And lo ! from opening clouds, I saw emerge

The loveliest moon, that ever silver'd o'er  
A shell for Neptune's goblet ; she did soar  
So passionately bright, my dazzled soul  
Commingling with her argent spheres did roll  
Through clear and cloudy, even when she went  
At last into a dark and vapoury tent—  
Whereat, methought, the lidless-eyed train  
Of planets all were in the blue again.  
To commune with those orbs, once more I raised  
My sight right upward : but it was quite dazed  
By a bright something, sailing down apace,  
Making me quickly veil my eyes and face :  
Again I look'd, and, O ye deities,  
Who from Olympus watch our destinies !  
Whence that completed form of all completeness ?  
Whence came that high perfection of all sweetness ?  
Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where, O where  
Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair ?  
Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western sun ;  
Not—thy soft hand, fair sister ! let me shun  
Such follying before thee—yet she had,  
Indeed, locks bright enough to make me mad ;  
And they were simply gordian'd up and braided,  
Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded,  
Her pearl round ears, white neck, and orb'd brow ;  
The which were blended in, I know not how,  
With such a paradise of lips and eyes,  
Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faintest sighs,  
That, when I think thereon, my spirit clings  
And plays about its fancy, till the stings  
Of human neighbourhood envenom all.  
Unto what awful power shall I call ?

To what high fane?—Ah! see her hovering feet,  
 More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely sweet  
 Than those of sea-born Venus, when she rose  
 From out her cradle shell. The wind out-blows



Her scarf into a fluttering pavilion ;  
 'Tis blue, and over-spangled with a million  
 Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed,  
 Over the darkest, lushest blue-bell bed,  
 Handfuls of daisies.”—“ Endymion, how strange !  
 Dream within dream ! ”—“ She took an airy range,  
 And then, towards me, like a very maid,  
 Came blushing, waning, willing, and afraid,

And press'd me by the hand : Ah ! 'twas too much ;  
Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,  
Yet held my recollection, even as one  
Who dives three fathoms where the waters run  
Gurgling in beds of coral : for anon,  
I felt upmounted in that region  
Where falling stars dart their artillery forth,  
And eagles struggle with the buffeting north  
That balances the heavy meteor-stone ;—  
Felt too, I was not fearful, nor alone,  
But lapp'd and lull'd along the dangerous sky.  
Soon, as it seem'd, we left our journeying high,  
And straightway into frightful eddies swoop'd ;  
Such as aye muster where grey time has scoop'd  
Huge dens and caverns in a mountain's side :  
There hollow sounds aroused me, and I sigh'd  
To faint once more by looking on my bliss—  
I was distracted ; madly did I kiss  
The wooing arms which held me, and did give  
My eyes at once to death : but 'twas to live,  
To take in draughts of life from the gold fount  
Of kind and passionate looks ; to count, and count  
The moments, by some greedy help that seem'd  
A second self, that each might be redeem'd  
And plunder'd of its load of blessedness.  
Ah, desperate mortal ! I even dared to press  
Her very cheek against my crowned lip,  
And, at that moment, felt my body dip  
Into a warmer air : a moment more,  
Our feet were soft in flowers. There was store  
Of newest joys upon that alp. Sometimes  
A scent of violets, and blossoming limes.



Loiter'd around us ; then of honey cells,  
Made delicate from all white-flower bells ;  
And once, above the edges of our nest,  
An arch face peep'd,—an Oread as I guess'd.

“ Why did I dream that sleep o'er-power'd me  
In midst of all this heaven ? Why not see,  
Far off, the shadows of his pinions dark,  
And stare them from me ? But no, like a spark  
That needs must die, although its little beam  
Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream  
Fell into nothing—into stupid sleep.  
And so it was, until a gentle creep,  
A careful moving caught my waking ears,  
And up I started : Ah ! my sighs, my tears,  
My clenched hands ;—for lo ! the poppies hung  
Dew-dabbled on their stalks, the ouzel sung  
A heavy ditty, and the sullen day  
Had chidden herald Hesperus away,  
With leaden looks : the solitary breeze  
Bluster'd, and slept, and its wild self did tease  
With wayward melancholy ; and I thought,  
Mark me, Peona ! that sometimes it brought  
Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled adieus !—  
Away I wander'd—all the pleasant hues  
Of heaven and earth had faded : deepest shades  
Were deepest dungeons ; heaths and sunny glades  
Were full of pestilent light ; our taintless rills  
Seem'd sooty, and o'erspread with upturn'd gills  
Of dying fish ; the vermeil rose had blown  
In frightful scarlet, and its thorns outgrown  
Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird

Before my heedless footsteps stirr'd, and stirr'd  
 In little journeys, I beheld in it  
 A disguised demon, missioned to knit  
 My soul with under darkness; to entice  
 My stumblings down some monstrous precipice :  
 Therefore I eager follow'd, and did curse  
 The disappointment. Time, that aged nurse,  
 Rock'd me to patience. Now, thank gentle heaven !  
 These things, with all their comfortings, are given  
 To my down-sunken hours, and with thee,  
 Sweet sister, help to stem the ebbing sea  
 Of weary life."

Thus ended he, and both  
 Sat silent : for the maid was very loth  
 To answer ; feeling well that breathed words  
 Would all be lost, unheard, and vain as swords  
 Against the enchased crocodile, or leaps  
 Of grasshoppers against the sun. She weeps,  
 And wonders ; struggles to devise some blame ;  
 To put on such a look as would say, *Shame*  
*On this poor weakness !* but, for all her strife,  
 She could as soon have crush'd away the life  
 From a sick dove. At length, to break the pause,  
 She said with trembling chance : " Is this the cause ?  
 This all ? Yet it is strange, and sad, alas !  
 That one who through this middle earth should pass  
 Most like a sojourning demi-god, and leave  
 His name upon the harp-string, should achieve  
 No higher bard than simple maidenhood,  
 Singing alone, and fearfully,—how the blood  
 Left his young cheek ; and how he used to stray

He knew not where : and how he would say, *nay*,  
If any said 'twas love : and yet 'twas love ;  
What could it be but love ? How a ring-dove  
Let fall a sprig of yew-tree in his path  
And how he died : and then, that love doth scathe  
The gentle heart, as northern blasts do roses ;  
And then the ballad of his sad life closes  
With sighs, and an alas !—Endymion !  
Be rather in the trumpet's mouth,—anon  
Among the winds at large—that all may hearken !  
Although, before the crystal heavens darken,  
I watch and dote upon the silver lakes  
Pictured in western cloudiness, that takes  
The semblance of gold rocks and bright gold sands,  
Islands, and creeks, and amber-fretted strands  
With horses prancing o'er them, palaces  
And towers of amethyst,—would I so tease  
My pleasant days, because I could not mount  
Into those regions ? The Morphean fount  
Of that fine element that visions, dreams,  
And fitful whims of sleep are made of, streams  
Into its airy channels with so subtle,  
So thin a breathing, not the spider's shuttle,  
Circled a million times within the space  
Of a swallow's nest-door, could delay a trace,  
A tinting of its quality : how light  
Must dreams themselves be ; seeing they're more slight  
Than the mere nothing that engenders them !  
Then wherefore sully the entrusted gem  
Of high and noble life with thoughts so sick ?  
Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick  
For nothing but a dream ? ” Hereat the youth

Look'd up : a conflicting of shame and ruth  
 Was in his plaited brow : yet his eyelids  
 Widen'd a little, as when Zephyr bids  
 A little breeze to creep between the fans  
 Of careless butterflies : amid his pains  
 He seem'd to taste a drop of manna-dew,  
 Full palatable ; and a colour grew  
 Upon his cheek, while thus he lifeful spake.

“ Peona ! ever have I long'd to slake  
 My thirst for the world's praises : nothing base,  
 No merely slumberous phantasm, could unlace  
 The stubborn canvas for my voyage prepared—  
 Though now 'tis tatter'd ; leaving my bark bared  
 And sullenly drifting : yet my higher hope  
 Is of too wide, too rainbow-large a scope,  
 To fret at myriads of earthly wrecks.  
 Wherein lies happiness ? In that which beck  
 Our ready minds to fellowship divine,  
 A fellowship with essence ; till we shine,  
 Full alchemized, and free of space. Behold  
 The clear religion of heaven ! Fold  
 A rose-leaf round thy finger's taperness,  
 And soothe thy lips : hist ! when the airy stress  
 Of music's kiss impregnates the free winds,  
 And with a sympathetic touch unbinds  
 Æolian magic from their lucid wombs :  
 Then old songs waken from enclouded tombs ;  
 Old ditties sigh above their father's grave ;  
 Ghosts of melodious prophesyings rave  
 Round every spot where trod Apollo's foot ;  
 Bronze clarions awake, and faintly bruit,

Where long ago a giant battle was ;  
And, from the turf, a lullaby doth pass  
In every place where infant Orpheus slept.  
Feel we these things!—that moment have we stept  
Into a sort of oneness, and our state  
Is like a floating spirit's. But there are  
Richer entanglements, enthralmments far  
More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,  
To the chief intensity : the crown of these  
Is made of love and friendship, and sits high  
Upon the forehead of humanity.  
All its more ponderous and bulky worth  
Is friendship, whence there ever issues forth  
A steady splendour ; but at the tip-top,  
There hangs by unseen film, an orb'd drop  
Of light, and that is love : its influence  
Thrown in our eyes genders a novel sense,  
At which we start and fret : till in the end,  
Melting into its radiance, we blend,  
Mingle, and so become a part of it,—  
Nor with aught else can our souls interknit  
So wingedly : when we combine therewith,  
Life's self is nourish'd by its proper pith,  
And we are nurtured like a pelican brood.  
Ay, so delicious is the unsating food,  
That men, who might have tower'd in the van  
Of all the congregated world, to fan  
And winnow from the coming step of time  
All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime  
Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,  
Have been content to let occasion die,  
Whilst they did sleep in love's Elysium.

And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,  
 Than speak against this ardent listlessness :  
 For I have ever thought that it might bless  
 The world with benefits unknowingly ;  
 As does the nightingale, up-perched high,  
 And cloister'd among cool and bunched leaves—  
 She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives  
 How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-grey hood.  
 Just so may love, although 'tis understood  
 The mere commingling of passionate breath,  
 Produce more than our searching witnesseth :  
 What I know not : but who, of men, can tell  
 That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would swell  
 To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,  
 The earth its dower of river, wood, and vale,  
 The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,  
 The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,  
 Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet,  
 If human souls did never kiss and greet ?

“ Now, if this earthly love has power to make  
 Men's being mortal, immortal ; to shake  
 Ambition from their memories, and brim  
 Their measure of content ; what merest whim,  
 Seems all this poor endeavour after fame,  
 To one, who keeps within his stedfast aim  
 A love immortal, an immortal too.  
 Look not so wilder'd ; for these things are true,  
 And never can be born of atomies  
 That buzz about our slumbers, like brain-flies,  
 Leaving us fancy-sick. No, no, I'm sure,  
 My restless spirit never could endure

To brood so long upon one luxury,  
Unless it did, though fearfully, espy  
A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.  
My sayings will the less obscured seem  
When I have told thee how my waking sight  
Has made me scruple whether that same night  
Was pass'd in dreaming. Harken, sweet Peona!  
Beyond the matron-temple of Latona,  
Which we should see but for these darkening boughs,  
Lies a deep hollow, from whose ragged brows  
Bushes and trees do lean all round athwart,  
And meet so nearly, that with wings outraught,  
And spreaded tail, a vulture could not glide  
Past them, but he must brush on every side.  
Some moulder'd steps lead into this cool cell,  
Far as the slabbed margin of a well,  
Whose patient level peeps its crystal eye  
Right upward, through the bushes, to the sky.  
Oft have I brought thee flowers, on their stalks set  
Like vestal primroses, but dark velvet  
Edges them round, and they have golden pits :  
'Twas there I got them, from the gaps and slits  
In a mossy stone, that sometimes was my seat,  
When all above was faint with mid-day heat.  
And there in strife no burning thoughts to heed,  
I'd bubble up the water through a reed ;  
So reaching back to boyhood : make me ships  
Of moulted feathers, touchwood, alder chips,  
With leaves stuck in them ; and the Neptune be  
Of their petty ocean. Oftener, heavily.  
When lovelorn hours had left me less a child,  
I sat contemplating the figures wild

Of o'er-head clouds melting the mirror through.  
Upon a day, while thus I watch'd, by flew  
A cloudy Cupid, with his bow and quiver ;  
So plainly character'd, no breeze would shiver



The happy chance : so happy, I was fain  
To follow it upon the open plain,  
And, therefore, was just going ; when, behold !  
A wonder, fair as any I have told—

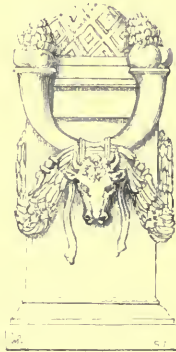


The same bright face I tasted in my sleep,  
Smiling in the clear well. My heart did leap  
Through the cool depth.—It moved as if to flee—  
I started up, when lo! refreshfully,  
There came upon my face, in plenteous showers,  
Dew-drops, and dewy buds, and leaves, and flowers,  
Wrapping all objects from my smother'd sight,  
Bathing my spirit in a new delight.  
Ay, such a breathless honey-feel of bliss  
Alone preserved me from the drear abyss  
Of death, for the fair form had gone again.  
Pleasure is oft a visitant; but pain  
Clings cruelly to us, like the gnawing sloth  
On the deer's tender haunches: late, and loth,  
'Tis scared away by slow-returning pleasure.  
How sickening, how dark the dreadful leisure  
Of weary days, made deeper exquisite,  
By a foreknowledge of unslumbrous night!  
Like sorrow came upon me, heavier still,  
Than when I wander'd from the poppy hill:  
And a whole age of lingering moments crept  
Sluggishly by, ere more contentment swept  
Away at once the deadly yellow spleen.  
Yes, thrice have I this fair enchantment seen;  
Once more been tortured with renewed life.  
When last the wintry gusts gave over strife  
With the conquering sun of spring, and left the skies  
Warm and serene, but yet with moisten'd eyes  
In pity of the shatter'd infant buds,—  
That time thou didst adorn, with amber studs,  
My hunting-cap, because I laugh'd and smiled,  
Chatted with thee, and many days exiled

All torment from my breast ;—'twas even then,  
Straying about, yet coop'd up in the den  
Of helpless discontent,—hurling my lance  
From place to place, and following at chance,  
At last, by hap, through some young trees it struck,  
And, plashing among bedded pebbles, stuck  
In the middle of a brook,—whose silver ramble  
Down twenty little falls through reeds and bramble,  
Tracing along, it brought me to a cave,  
Whence it ran brightly forth, and white did lave  
The nether sides of mossy stones and rock,—  
'Mong which it gurgled blithe adieus, to mock  
Its own sweet grief at parting. Overhead,  
Hung a lush screen of drooping weeds, and spread  
Thick, as to curtain up some wood-nymph's home.  
' Ah ! impious mortal, whither do I roam !'  
Said I, low-voiced : ' Ah, whither ! 'Tis the grot  
Of Proserpine, when Hell, obscure and hot,  
Doth her resign : and where her tender hands  
She dabbles on the cool and sluicy sands :  
Or 'tis the cell of Echo, where she sits,  
And babbles thorough silence, till her wits  
Are gone in tender madness, and anon,  
Faints into sleep, with many a dying tone  
Of sadness. O that she would take my vows,  
And breathe them sighingly among the boughs,  
To sue her gentle ears for whose fair head,  
Daily, I pluck sweet flowerets from their bed,  
And weave them dyingly—send honey-whispers  
Round every leaf, that all those gentle lispers  
May sigh my love unto her pitying !  
O charitable Echo ! hear, and sing

This ditty to her!—tell her—So I stay'd  
My foolish tongue, and listening, half afraid,  
Stood stupefied with my own empty folly,  
And blushing for the freaks of melancholy.  
Salt tears were coming, when I heard my name  
Most fondly lipp'd, and then these accents came :  
' Endymion ! the cave is secreter  
Than the isle of Delos. Echo hence shall stir  
No sighs but sigh-warm kisses, or light noise  
Of thy combing hand, the while it travelling cloys  
And trembles through my labyrinthine hair.'  
At that oppress'd, I hurried in.—Ah ! where  
Are those swift moments ! Whither are they fled ?  
I'll smile no more, Peona ; nor will wed  
Sorrow, the way to death ; but patiently  
Bear up against it : so farewell, sad sigh ;  
And come instead demurest meditation,  
To occupy me wholly, and to fashion  
My pilgrimage for the world's dusky brink.  
No more will I count over, link by link,  
My chain of grief : no longer strive to find  
A half-forgetfulness in mountain wind  
Blustering about my ears : ay, thou shalt see,  
Dearest of sisters, what my life shall be ;  
What a calm round of hours shall make my days.  
There is a paly flame of hope that plays  
Where'er I look : but yet, I'll say 'tis nought—  
And here I bid it die. Have not I caught,  
Already, a more healthy countenance ?  
By this the sun is setting ; we may chance  
Meet some of our near-dwellers with my ear."

This said, he rose, faint-smiling, like a star  
Through autumn mists, and took Peona's hand :  
They stept into the boat, and launch'd from land.





BOOK II.



## BOOK II.

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O SOVEREIGN power of love! O grief! O balm!  
All records, saving thine, come cool, and calm,  
And shadowy, through the mist of passed years :  
For others, good or bad, hatred and tears  
Have become indolent ; but touching thine,  
One sigh doth echo, one poor sob doth pine,  
One kiss brings honey-dew from buried days.  
The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er their blaze,  
Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears, keen blades,  
Struggling, and blood, and shrieks—all dimly fades  
Into some backward corner of the brain ;  
Yet, in our very souls, we feel amain  
The close of Troilus and Cressid sweet.  
Hence, pageant history ! hence, gilded cheat !  
Swart planet in the universe of deeds!  
Wide sea, that one continuous murmur breeds  
Along the pebbled shore of memory !  
Many old rotten-timber'd boats there be  
Upon thy vaporous bosom, magnified  
To goodly vessels ; many a sail of pride,

And golden-keel'd, is left unlaunch'd and dry.  
 But wherefore this? What care, though owl did fly  
 About the great Athenian admiral's mast?  
 What care, though striding Alexander past  
 The Indus with his Macedonian numbers?  
 Though old Ulysses tortured from his slumbers  
 The glutt'd Cyclops, what care?—Juliet leaning  
 Amid her window-flowers,—sighing,—weaning  
 Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow,  
 Doth more avail than these: the silver flow  
 Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,  
 Fair Pastorella in the bandit's den,  
 Are things to brood on with more ardency  
 Than the death-day of empires. Fearfully  
 Must such conviction come upon his head,  
 Who, thus far, discontent, has dared to tread,  
 Without one muse's smile, or kind behest,  
 The path of love and poesy. But rest,  
 In chafing restlessness, is yet more drear  
 Than to be crush'd, in striving to uprear  
 Love's standard on the battlements of song.  
 So once more days and nights aid me along,  
 Like legion'd soldiers.

Brain-sick shepherd-prince!

What promise hast thou faithful guarded since  
 The day of sacrifice? Or, have new sorrows  
 Come with the constant dawn upon thy morrows?  
 Alas! 'tis his old grief. For many days,  
 Has he been wandering in uncertain ways:  
 Through wilderness, and woods of mossed oaks;  
 Counting his woe-worn minutes, by the strokes



Of the lone wood-cutter ; and listening still,  
Hour after hour, to each lush-leaved rill.  
Now he is sitting by a shady spring,  
And elbow-deep with feverous fingering  
Stems the upbursting cold : a wild rose-tree  
Pavilions him in bloom, and he doth see  
A bud which snares his fancy : lo ! but now  
He plucks it, dips its stalk in the water : how !  
It swells, it buds, it flowers beneath his sight ;  
And, in the middle, there is softly pight  
A golden butterfly ; upon whose wings  
There must be surely character'd strange things,  
For with wide eye he wonders, and smiles oft.

Lightly this little herald flew aloft,  
Follow'd by glad Endymion's clasped hands :  
Onward it flies. From languor's sullen bands  
His limbs are loosed, and eager, on he hies  
Dazzled to trace it in the sunny skies.  
It seem'd he flew, the way so easy was ;  
And like a new-born spirit did he pass  
Through the green evening quiet in the sun,  
O'er many a heath, through many a woodland dun,  
Through buried paths, where sleepy twilight dreams  
The summer time away. One track unseams  
A wooded cleft, and, far away, the blue  
Of ocean fades upon him ; then, anew,  
He sinks adown a solitary glen,  
Where there was never sound of mortal men,  
Saving, perhaps, some snow-light cadences  
Melting to silence, when upon the breeze  
Some holy bark let forth an anthem sweet,

To cheer itself to Delphi. Still his feet  
Went swift beneath the merry-winged guide,  
Until it reach'd a splashing fountain's side  
That, near a cavern's mouth, for ever pour'd  
Unto the temperate air; then high it soar'd,  
And, downward, suddenly began to dip,  
As if, athirst with so much toil, 'twould sip  
The crystal spout-head: so it did, with touch  
Most delicate, as though afraid to smutch  
Even with mealy gold the waters clear.  
But, at that very touch, to disappear  
So fairy-quick, was strange! Bewildered,  
Endymion sought around, and shook each bed  
Of covert flowers in vain; and then he flung  
Himself along the grass. What gentle tongue,  
What whisperer disturb'd his gloomy rest?  
It was a nymph uprisen to the breast  
In the fountain's pebbly margin, and she stood  
'Mong lilies, like the youngest of the brood.  
To him her dripping hand she softly kist,  
And anxiously began to plait and twist  
Her ringlets round her fingers, saying: "Youth!  
Too long, alas, hast thou starved on the ruth,  
The bitterness of love: too long indeed,  
Seeing thou art so gentle. Could I weed  
Thy soul of care, by heavens, I would offer  
All the bright riches of my crystal coffer  
To Amphitrite; all my clear-eyed fish,  
Golden, or rainbow-sided, or purplish,  
Vermilion-tail'd, or fin'd with silvery gauze;  
Yea, or my veined pebble-floor, that draws  
A virgin-light to the deep; my grotto-sands,

Tawny and gold, oozed slowly from far lands  
By my diligent springs: my level lilies, shells,  
My charming-rod, my potent river spells;



Yes, everything, even to the pearly cup  
Meander gave me,—for I bubbled up  
To fainting creatures in a desert wild.

But woe is me, I am but as a child  
 To gladden thee ; and all I dare to say,  
 Is, that I pity thee ; that on this day  
 I've been thy guide ; that thou must wander far  
 In other regions, past the scanty bar  
 To mortal steps, before thou canst be ta'en  
 From every wasting sigh, from every pain,  
 Into the gentle bosom of thy love.  
 Why it is thus, one knows in heaven above :  
 But, a poor Naiad, I guess not. Farewell !  
 I have a ditty for my hollow cell."

Hereat she vanish'd from Endymion's gaze,  
 Who brooded o'er the water in amaze :  
 The dashing fount pour'd on, and where its pool  
 Lay, half asleep, in grass and rushes cool,  
 Quick waterflies and gnats were sporting still,  
 And fish were dimpling, as if good nor ill  
 Had fallen out that hour. The wanderer,  
 Holding his forehead, to keep off the burr  
 Of smothering fancies, patiently sat down ;  
 And, while beneath the evening's sleepy frown  
 Glow-worms began to trim their starry lamps,  
 Thus breathed he to himself: " Whoso encamps  
 To take a fancied city of delight,  
 O what a wretch is he ! and when 'tis his,  
 After long toil and travelling, to miss  
 The kernel of his hopes, how more than vile !  
 Yet, for him there's refreshment even in toil :  
 Another city doth he set about,  
 Free from the smallest pebble-bead of doubt  
 That he will seize on trickling honey-combs :

Alas ! he finds them dry ; and then he foams.  
And onward to another city speeds.  
But this is human life : the war, the deeds,  
The disappointment, the anxiety,  
Imagination's struggles, far and nigh,  
All human ; bearing in themselves this good,  
That they are still the air, the subtle food,  
To make us feel existence, and to show  
How quiet death is. Where soil is men grow,  
Whether to weeds or flowers ; but for me,  
There is no depth to strike in : I can see  
Nought earthly worth my compassing ; so stand  
Upon a misty, jutting head of land—  
Alone ? No, no ; and by the Orphean lute,  
When mad Eurydice is listening to 't.  
I'd rather stand upon this misty peak,  
With not a thing to sigh for, or to seek,  
But the soft shadow of my thrice-seen love,  
Than be—I care not what. O meekest dove  
Of heaven ! O Cynthia, ten-times bright and fair !  
From thy blue throne, now filling all the air,  
Glance but one little beam of temper'd light  
Into my bosom, that the dreadful might  
And tyranny of love be somewhat scared !  
Yet do not so, sweet queen ; one torment spared,  
Would give a pang to jealous misery,  
Worse than the torment's self : but rather tie  
Large wings upon my shoulders, and point out  
My love's far dwelling. Though the playful rout  
Of Cupids shun thee, too divine art thou,  
Too keen in beauty, for thy silver prow  
Not to have dipp'd in love's most gentle stream.

O be propitious, nor severely deem  
My madness impious ; for, by all the stars  
That tend thy bidding, I do think the bars  
That kept my spirit in are burst—that I  
Am sailing with thee through the dizzy sky !  
How beautiful thou art ! The world how deep !  
How tremulous-dazzlingly the wheels sweep  
Around their axle ! Then these gleaming reins,  
How lithe ! When this thy chariot attains  
Its airy goal, haply some bower veils  
Those twilight eyes ? Those eyes !—my spirit fails ;  
Dear goddess, help ! or the wide-gaping air  
Will gulf me—help ! ”—At this, with madden'd stare,  
And lifted hands, and trembling lips, he stood ;  
Like old Deucalion mountain'd o'er the flood,  
Or blind Orion hungry for the morn.  
And, but from the deep cavern there was borne  
A voice, he had been froze to senseless stone ;  
Nor sigh of his, nor plaint, nor passion'd moan  
Had more been heard. Thus swell'd it forth : “ Descend,  
Young mountaineer ! descend where alleys bend  
Into the sparry hollows of the world !  
Oft hast thou seen bolts of the thunder hurl'd  
As from thy threshold ; day by day hast been  
A little lower than the chilly sheen  
Of icy pinnacles, and dipp'dst thine arms  
Into the deadening ether that still charms  
Their marble being : now, as deep profound  
As those are high, descend ! He ne'er is crown'd  
With immortality, who fears to follow  
Where airy voices lead : so through the hollow,  
The silent mysteries of earth, descend ! ”

He heard but the last words, nor could contend  
One moment in reflection : for he fled  
Into the fearful deep, to hide his head  
From the clear moon, the trees, and coming madness.

'Twas far too strange, and wonderful for sadness ;  
Sharpening, by degrees, his appetite  
To dive into the deepest. Dark, nor light,  
The region ; nor bright, nor sombre wholly,  
But mingled up ; a gleaming melancholy ;  
A dusky empire and its diadems ;  
One faint eternal eventide of gems.  
Ay, millions sparkled on a vein of gold,  
Along whose track the prince quick footsteps told.  
With all its lines abrupt and angular :  
Out-shooting sometimes, like a meteor-star,  
Through a vast antre ; then the metal roof.  
Like Vulcan's rainbow, with some monstrous roof  
Curves hugely : now, far in the deep abyss,  
It seems an angry lightning, and doth hiss  
Fancy into belief : anon it leads  
Through winding passages, where sameness breeds  
Vexing conceptions of some sudden change ;  
Whether to silver grots, or giant range  
Of sapphire columns, or fantastic bridge  
Athwart a flood of crystal. On a ridge  
Now fareth he, that o'er the vast beneath  
Towers like an ocean-cliff, and whence he seeth  
A hundred waterfalls, whose voices come  
But as the murmuring surge. Chilly and numb  
His bosom grew, when first he, far away.  
Described an orb'd diamond, set to fray

Old Darkness from his throne : 'twas like the sun  
Uprisen o'er chaos : and with such a stun  
Came the amazement, that, absorb'd in it,  
He saw not fiercer wonders—past the wit  
Of any spirit to tell, but one of those  
Who, when this planet's sphering time doth close,  
Will be its high remembrancers : who they ?  
The mighty ones who have made eternal day  
For Greece and England. While astonishment  
With deep-drawn sighs was quieting, he went  
Into a marble gallery, passing through  
A mimic temple, so complete and true  
In sacred custom, that he well nigh fear'd  
To search it inwards ; whence far off appear'd,  
Through a long pillar'd vista, a fair shrine,  
And, just beyond, on light tiptoe divine,  
A quiver'd Dian. Stepping awfully,  
The youth approach'd ; oft turning his veil'd eye  
Down sidelong aisles, and into niches old :  
And, when more near against the marble cold  
He had touch'd his forehead, he began to thread  
All courts and passages, where silence dead,  
Roused by his whispering footsteps, murmur'd faint :  
And long he traversed to and fro, to acquaint  
Himself with every mystery, and awe ;  
Till, weary, he sat down before the maw  
Of a wide outlet, fathomless and dim,  
To wild uncertainty and shadows grim.  
There, when new wonders ceased to float before,  
And thoughts of self came on, how crude and sore  
The journey homeward to habitual self !  
A mad-pursuing of the fog-born elf,



Whose flitting lantern, through rude nettle-brier,  
Cheats us into a swamp, into a fire,  
Into the bosom of a hated thing.

What misery most drowningly doth sing  
In lone Endymion's ear, now he has caught  
The goal of consciousness? Ah, 'tis the thought,  
The deadly feel of solitude: for lo!  
He cannot see the heavens, nor the flow  
Of rivers, nor hill-flowers running wild  
In pink and purple chequer, nor, up-piled,  
The cloudy rack slow journeying in the west,  
Like herded elephants; nor felt, nor prest  
Cool grass, nor tasted the fresh slumberous air:  
But far from such companionship to wear  
An unknown time, surcharged with grief, away,  
Was now his lot. And must he patient stay,  
Tracing fantastic figures with his spear?  
"No!" exclaim'd he, "why should I tarry here?"  
No! loudly echoed times innumerable.  
At which he straightway started, and 'gan tell  
His paces back into the temple's chief;  
Warming and glowing strong in the belief  
Of help from Dian: so that when again  
He caught her airy form, thus did he plain.  
Moving more near the while: "O Haunter chaste  
Of river sides, and woods, and heathy waste,  
Where with thy silver bow and arrows keen  
Art thou now forested? O woodland Queen,  
What smoothest air thy smoother forehead woos?  
Where dost thou listen to the wide halloos  
Of thy departed nymphs? Through what dark tree

Glimmers thy crescent? Wheresoe'er it be,  
'Tis in the breath of heaven: thou dost taste  
Freedom as none can taste it, nor dost waste  
Thy loveliness in dismal elements;  
But, finding in our green earth sweet contents,  
There livest blissfully. Ah, if to thee  
It feels Elysian, how rich to me,  
An exiled mortal, sounds its pleasant name!  
Within my breast there lives a choking flame—  
O let me cool it zephyr-boughs among!  
A homeward fever parches up my tongue—  
O let me slake it at the running springs!  
Upon my ear a noisy nothing rings—  
O let me once more hear the linnet's note!  
Before mine eyes thick films and shadows float—  
O let me 'noint them with the heaven's light!  
Dost thou now lave thy feet and ankles white?  
O think how sweet to me the freshening sluice!  
Dost thou now please thy thirst with berry-juice?  
O think how this dry palate would rejoice!  
If in soft slumber thou dost hear my voice,  
O think how I should love a bed of flowers!—  
Young goddess! let me see my native bowers!  
Deliver me from this rapacious deep!"

Thus ending loudly, as he would o'erleap  
His destiny, alert he stood: but when  
Obstinate silence came heavily again,  
Feeling about for its old couch of space  
And airy cradle, lowly bow'd his face,  
Desponding, o'er the marble floor's cold thrill.  
But 'twas not long; for, sweeter than the rill

To its old channel, or a swollen tide  
To margin shallows, where the leaves he spied,  
And flowers, and wreaths, and ready myrtle crowns  
Up heaping through the slab: refreshment drowns  
Itself, and strives its own delights to hide—  
Nor in one spot alone; the floral pride  
In a long whispering birth enchanted grew  
Before his footsteps; as when heaved anew  
Old ocean rolls a lengthen'd wave to the shore,  
Down whose green back the short-lived foam, all hoar,  
Bursts gradual, with a wayward indolence.

Increasing still in heart, and pleasant sense,  
Upon his fairy journey on he hastes;  
So anxious for the end, he scarcely wastes  
One moment with his hand among the sweets:  
Onward he goes—he stops—his bosom beats  
As plainly in his ear, as the faint charm  
Of which the throbs were born. This still alarm,  
This sleepy music, forced him walk tiptoe:  
For it came more softly than the east could blow  
Arion's magic to the Atlantic isles;  
Or than the west, made jealous by the smiles  
Of throned Apollo, could breathe back the lyre  
To seas Ionian and Tyrian.

O did he ever live, that lonely man,  
Who loved—and music slew not? 'Tis the pest  
Of love, that fairest joys give most unrest;  
That things of delicate and tenderest worth  
Are swallow'd all, and made a seared dearth,  
By one consuming flame: it doth immerse

And suffocate true blessings in a curse.  
 Half-happy, by comparison of bliss,  
 Is miserable. 'Twas even so with this  
 Dew-dropping melody, in the Carian's ear ;  
 First heaven, then hell, and then forgotten clear,  
 Vanish'd in elemental passion.

And down some swart abyss he had gone,  
 Had not a heavenly guide benignant led  
 To where thick myrtle branches, 'gainst his head  
 Brushing, awaken'd : then the sounds again  
 Went noiseless as a passing noontide rain  
 Over a bower, where little space he stood ;  
 For as the sunset peeps into a wood,  
 So saw he panting light, and towards it went  
 Through winding alleys ; and lo, wonderment !  
 Upon soft verdure saw, one here, one there,  
 Cupids a-slumbering on their pinions fair.

After a thousand mazes overgone,  
 At last, with sudden step, he came upon  
 A chamber, myrtle-wall'd, embower'd high,  
 Full of light, incense, tender minstrelsy,  
 And more of beautiful and strange beside :  
 For on a silken couch of rosy pride,  
 In midst of all, there lay a sleeping youth  
 Of fondest beauty ; fonder, in fair sooth,  
 Than sighs could fathom, or contentment reach :  
 And coverlids gold-tinted like the peach,  
 Or ripe October's faded marigolds,  
 Fell sleek about him in a thousand folds—  
 Not hiding up an Apollonian curve

Of neck and shoulder, nor the tenting swerve  
Of knee from knee, nor ankles pointing light ;  
But rather, giving them to the fill'd sight  
Officiously. Sideway his face reposed  
On one white arm, and tenderly unclosed,  
By tenderest pressure, a faint damask mouth  
To slumbery pout ; just as the morning south  
Disparts a dew-lipp'd rose. Above his head,  
Four lily stalks did their white honours wed  
To make a coronal ; and round him grew  
All tendrils green, of every bloom and hue,  
Together intertwined and tramell'd fresh :  
The vine of glossy sprout ; the ivy mesh,  
Shading its Ethiop berries ; and woodbine,  
Of velvet leaves and bugle-blooms divine ;  
Convolvulus in streaked vases flush ;  
The creeper, mellowing for an autumn blush ;  
And virgin's bower, trailing airily ;  
With others of the sisterhood. Hard by,  
Stood serene Cupids watching silently.  
One, kneeling to a lyre, touch'd the strings,  
Muffling to death the pathos with his wings ;  
And, ever and anon, uprose to look  
At the youth's slumber ; while another took  
A willow bough, distilling odorous dew,  
And shook it on his hair ; another flew  
In through the woven roof, and fluttering-wise  
Rain'd violets upon his sleeping eyes.

At these enchantments, and yet many more,  
The breathless Latmian wonder'd o'er and o'er ;  
Until impatient in embarrassment,

He forthright pass'd, and lightly treading went  
 To that same feather'd lyrist, who straightway,  
 Smiling, thus whisper'd : " Though from upper day  
 Thou art a wanderer, and thy presence here  
 Might seem unholy, be of happy cheer !  
 For 'tis the nicest touch of human honour,  
 When some ethereal and high-favouring donor  
 Presents immortal bowers to mortal sense ;  
 As now 'tis done to thee, Endymion. Hence  
 Was I in no wise startled. So recline  
 Upon these living flowers. Here is wine,  
 Alive with sparkles—never, I aver,  
 Since Ariadne was a vintager,  
 So cool a purple : taste these juicy pears,  
 Sent me by sad Vertumnus, when his fears  
 Were high about Pomona : here is cream,  
 Deepening to richness from a snowy gleam ;  
 Sweeter than that nurse Amalthea skim'm'd  
 For the boy Jupiter : and here, undimm'd  
 By any touch, a bunch of blooming plums  
 Ready to melt between an infant's gums :  
 And here is manna pick'd from Syrian trees,  
 In starlight, by the three Hesperides.  
 Feast on, and meanwhile I will let thee know  
 Of all these things around us." He did so,  
 Still brooding o'er the cadence of his lyre ;  
 And thus : " I need not any hearing tire  
 By telling how the sea-born goddess pined  
 For a mortal youth, and how she strove to bind  
 Him all in all unto her doating self.  
 Who would not be so prison'd ? but, fond elf,  
 He was content to let her amorous plea

Faint through his careless arms ; content to see  
An unseized heaven dying at his feet ;  
Content, O fool ! to make a cold retreat,  
When on the pleasant grass such love, lovelorn,  
Lay sorrowing ; when every tear was born  
Of diverse passion ; when her lips and eyes  
Were closed in sullen moisture, and quick sighs  
Came vex'd and pettish through her nostrils small.  
Hush ! no exclaim—yet, justly might'st thou call  
Curses upon his head.—I was half glad,  
But my poor mistress went distract and mad,  
When the boar tusk'd him : so away she flew  
To Jove's high throne, and by her plainings drew  
Immortal tear-drops down the thunderer's beard ;  
Whereon, it was decreed he should be rear'd  
Each summer-time to life. Lo ! this is he,  
That same Adonis, safe in the privacy  
Of this still region all his winter-sleep.  
Ay, sleep ; for when our love-sick queen did weep  
Over his waned corse, the tremulous shower  
Heal'd up the wound, and, with a balmy power,  
Medicined death to a lengthen'd drowsiness :  
The which she fills with visions, and doth dress  
In all this quiet luxury ; and hath set  
Us young immortals, without any let,  
To watch his slumber through. 'Tis well nigh pass'd,  
Even to a moment's filling up, and fast  
She scuds with summer breezes, to pant through  
The first long kiss, warm firstling, to renew  
Embower'd sports in Cytherea's isle.  
Look, how those winged listeners all this while  
Stand anxious : see ! behold !"—This clamant word

Broke through the careful silence; for they heard  
A rustling noise of leaves, and out there flutter'd  
Pigeons and doves: Adonis something mutter'd,  
The while one hand, that erst upon his thigh  
Lay dormant, moved convulsed and gradually  
Up to his forehead. Then there was a hum  
Of sudden voices, echoing, "Come! come!  
Arise! awake! Clear summer has forth walk'd  
Unto the clover-sward, and she has talk'd  
Full soothingly to every nested finch:  
Rise, Cupids! or we'll give the blue-bell pinch  
To your dimpled arms. Once more sweet life begin!"  
At this, from every side they hurried in,  
Rubbing their sleepy eyes with lazy wrists,  
And doubling overhead their little fists  
In backward yawns. But all were soon alive:  
For as delicious wine doth, sparkling, dive  
In nectar'd clouds and curls through water fair,  
So from the arbour roof down swell'd an air  
Odorous and enlivening; making all  
To laugh, and play, and sing, and loudly call  
For their sweet queen: when lo! the wreathed green  
Disparted, and far upward could be seen  
Blue heaven, and a silver car, air-borne,  
Whose silent wheels, fresh wet from clouds of morn,  
Spun off a drizzling dew,—which falling chill  
On soft Adonis' shoulders, made him still  
Nestle and turn uneasily about.  
Soon were the white doves plain, with necks stretch'd out,  
And silken traces lighten'd in descent;  
And soon, returning from love's banishment,  
Queen Venus leaning downward open-arm'd:



Her shadow fell upon his breast, and charm'd  
A tumult to his heart, and a new life  
Into his eyes. Ah, miserable strife,  
But for her comforting ! unhappy sight,



But meeting her blue orbs ! Who. who can write  
Of these first minutes ? The unchariest muse  
To embracements warm as theirs makes coy excuse.

O it has ruffled every spirit there,  
Saving love's self, who stands superb to share

The general gladness : awfully he stands ;  
A sovereign quell is in his waving hands ;  
No sight can bear the lightning of his bow ;  
His quiver is mysterious, none can know  
What themselves think of it ; from forth his eyes  
There darts strange light of varied hues and dyes :  
A scowl is sometimes on his brow, but who  
Look full upon it feel anon the blue  
Of his fair eyes run liquid through their souls.  
Endymion feels it, and no more controls  
The burning prayer within him ; so, bent low,  
He had begun a plaining of his woe.  
But Venus, bending forward, said : “ My child,  
Favour this gentle youth ; his days are wild  
With love—he—but alas ! too well I see  
Thou know’st the deepness of his misery.  
Ah, smile not so, my son : I tell thee true,  
That when through heavy hours I used to rue  
The endless sleep of this new-born Adon’,  
This stranger aye I pitied. For upon  
A dreary morning once I fled away  
Into the breezy clouds, to weep and pray  
For this my love : for vexing Mars had teased  
Me even to tears : thence, when a little eased,  
Down-looking, vacant, through a hazy wood,  
I saw this youth as he despairing stood :  
Those same dark curls blown vagrant in the wind ;  
Those same full fringed lids a constant blind  
Over his sullen eyes : I saw him throw  
Himself on wither’d leaves, even as though  
Death had come sudden ; for no jot he moved,  
Yet mutter’d wildly. I could hear he loved

Some fair immortal, and that his embrace  
 Had zoned her through the night. There is no trace  
 Of this in heaven: I have mark'd each cheek,  
 And find it is the vainest thing to seek;  
 And that of all things 'tis kept secretest.  
 Endymion! one day thou wilt be blest:  
 So still obey the guiding hand that fends  
 Thee safely through these wonders for sweet ends.  
 'Tis a concealment needful in extreme;  
 And if I guess'd not so, the sunny beam  
 Thou shouldst mount up to with me. Now adieu!  
 Here must we leave thee."—At these words up flew  
 The impatient doves, up rose the floating car,  
 Up went the hum celestial. High afar  
 The Latmian saw them minish into nought;  
 And, when all were clear vanish'd, still he caught  
 A vivid lightning from that dreadful bow.  
 When all was darken'd, with Ætnean throe  
 The earth closed—gave a solitary moan—  
 And left him once again in twilight lone.

He did not rave, he did not stare aghast,  
 For all those visions were o'ergone, and past,  
 And he in loneliness: he felt assured  
 Of happy times, when all he had endured  
 Would seem a feather to the mighty prize.  
 So, with unusual gladness, on he hies  
 Through caves, and palaces of mottled ore,  
 Gold dome, and crystal wall, and turquois floor,  
 Black polish'd porticoes of awful shade,  
 And, at the last, a diamond balustrade,  
 Leading afar past wild magnificence,

Spiral through ruggedest loop-holes, and thence  
Stretching across a void, then guiding o'er  
Enormous chasms, where, all foam and roar,  
Streams subterranean tease their granite beds ;  
Then heighten'd just above the silvery heads  
Of a thousand fountains, so that he could dash  
The waters with his spear ; but at the splash,  
Done heedlessly, those spouting columns rose  
Sudden a poplar's height, and 'gan to inclose  
His diamond path with fretwork streaming round  
Alike, and dazzling cool, and with a sound,  
Haply, like dolphin tumults, when sweet shells  
Welcome the float of Thetis. Long he dwells  
On this delight ; for, every minute's space,  
The streams with changed magic interlace :  
Sometimes like delicatest lattices,  
Cover'd with crystal vines ; then weeping trees,  
Moving about as in a gentle wind,  
Which, in a wink, to watery gauze refined,  
Pour'd into shapes of curtain'd canopies,  
Spangled, and rich with liquid broideries  
Of flowers, peacocks, swans, and naiads fair.  
Swifter than lightning went these wonders rare ;  
And then the water, into stubborn streams  
Collecting, mimick'd the wrought oaken beams,  
Pillars, and frieze, and high fantastic roof,  
Of those dusk places in times far aloof  
Cathedrals call'd. He bade a loath farewell  
To these founts Protean, passing gulf, and dell,  
And torrent, and ten thousand jutting shapes,  
Half seen through deepest gloom, and grisly gapes,  
Blackening on every side, and overhead

A vaulted dome like heaven's far bespread  
With starlight gems : ay, all so huge and strange,  
The solitary felt a hurried change  
Working within him into something dreary,—  
Vex'd like a morning eagle, lost and weary,  
And purblind amid foggy midnight wolds.  
But he revives at once : for who beholds  
New sudden things, nor casts his mental slough ?  
Forth from a rugged arch, in the dusk below,  
Came mother Cybele ! alone—alone—  
In sombre chariot ; dark foldings thrown  
About her majesty, and front death-pale,  
With turrets crown'd. Four maned lions hale  
The sluggish wheels ; solemn their toothed maws,  
Their surly eyes brow-hidden, heavy paws  
Uplifted drowsily, and nery tails  
Cowering their tawny brushes. Silent sails  
This shadowy queen athwart, and faints away  
In another gloomy arch.

Wherefore delay,

Young traveller, in such a mournful place ?  
Art thou wayworn, or canst not further trace  
The diamond path ? And does it indeed end  
Abrupt in middle air ? Yet earthward bend  
Thy forehead, and to Jupiter cloud-borne  
Call ardently ! He was indeed wayworn ;  
Abrupt, in middle air, his way was lost ;  
To cloud-borne Jove he bow'd, and there crost  
Towards him a large eagle, 'twixt whose wings,  
Without one impious word, himself he flings,  
Committed to the darkness and the gloom :

Down, down, uncertain to what pleasant doom,  
 Swift as a fathoming plummet down he fell  
 Through unknown things ; till exhaled asphodel,  
 And rose, with spicy fannings interbreathed,  
 Came swelling forth where little caves were wreathed  
 So thick with leaves and mosses, that they seem'd  
 Large honeycombs of green, and freshly teem'd  
 With airs delicious. In the greenest nook  
 The eagle landed him, and farewell took.

It was a jasmine bower, all bestrown  
 With golden moss. His every sense had grown  
 Ethereal for pleasure ; 'bove his head  
 Flew a delight half-graspable ; his tread  
 Was Hesperean ; to his capable ears  
 Silence was music from the holy spheres ;  
 A dewy luxury was in his eyes ;  
 The little flowers felt his pleasant sighs  
 And stirr'd them faintly. Verdant cave and cell  
 He wander'd through, oft wondering at such swell  
 Of sudden exaltation : but, " Alas !"  
 Said he, " will all this gush of feeling pass  
 Away in solitude ? And must they wane,  
 Like melodies upon a sandy plain,  
 Without an echo ? Then shall I be left  
 So sad, so melancholy, so bereft !  
 Yet still I feel immortal ! O my love,  
 My breath of life, where art thou ? High above,  
 Dancing before the morning gates of heaven ?  
 Or keeping watch among those starry seven,  
 Old Atlas' children ? Art a maid of the waters,  
 One of shell-winding Triton's bright-hair'd daughters ?

Or art, impossible! a nymph of Dian's,  
Weaving a coronal of tender scions  
For very idleness? Where'er thou art,  
Methinks it now is at my will to start  
Into thine arms; to scare Aurora's train,  
And snatch thee from the morning; o'er the main  
To scud like a wild bird, and take thee off  
From thy sea-foamy cradle; or to doff  
Thy shepherd vest, and woo thee 'mid fresh leaves.  
No, no, too eagerly my soul deceives  
Its powerless self: I know this cannot be.  
O let me then by some sweet dreaming flee  
To her entrancements: hither sleep awhile!  
Hither most gentle sleep! and soothing foil  
For some few hours the coming solitude."

Thus spake he, and that moment felt endued  
With power to dream deliciously; so wound  
Through a dim passage, searching till he found  
The smoothest mossy bed and deepest, where  
He threw himself, and just into the air  
Stretching his indolent arms, he took, O bliss!  
A naked waist: "Fair Cupid, whence is this?"  
A well-known voice sigh'd, "Sweetest, here am I!"  
At which soft ravishment, with dotting cry  
They trembled to each other.—Helicon!  
O fountain'd hill! Old Homer's Helicon!  
That thou wouldst spout a little streamlet o'er  
These sorry pages; then the verse would soar  
And sing above this gentle pair, like lark  
Over his nested young: but all is dark  
Around thine aged top, and thy clear fount

Exhales in mists to heaven. Ay, the count  
Of mighty Poets is made up; the scroll  
Is folded by the Muses; the bright roll  
Is in Apollo's hand: our dazed eyes  
Have seen a new tinge in the western skies:  
The world has done its duty. Yet, oh yet,  
Although the sun of poesy is set,  
These lovers did embrace, and we must weep  
That there is no old power left to steep  
A quill immortal in their joyous tears.  
Long time in silence did their anxious fears  
Question that thus it was; long time they lay  
Fondling and kissing every doubt away;  
Long time ere soft caressing sobs began  
To mellow into words, and then there ran  
Two bubbling springs of talk from their sweet lips.  
"O known Unknown! from whom my being sips  
Such darling essence, wherefore may I not  
Be ever in these arms? in this sweet spot  
Pillow my chin for ever? ever press  
These toying hands and kiss their smooth excess?  
Why not for ever and for ever feel  
That breath about my eyes? Ah, thou wilt steal  
Away from me again, indeed, indeed—  
Thou wilt be gone away, and wilt not heed  
My lonely madness. Speak, my kindest fair!  
Is—is it to be so? No! Who will dare  
To pluck thee from me? And, of thine own will,  
Full well I feel thou wouldst not leave me. Still  
Let me entwine thee surer, surer—now  
How can we part? Elysium! Who art thou?  
Who, that thou canst not be for ever here,



Or lift me with thee to some starry sphere ?  
Enchantress ! tell me by this soft embrace,  
By the most soft complexion of thy face,  
Those lips, O slippery blisses ! twinkling eyes,  
And by these tenderest, milky sovereignties—  
These tenderest, and by the nectar-wine,  
The passion ”——“ O loved Ida the divine !  
Endymion ! dearest ! Ah, unhappy me !  
His soul will 'scape us—O felicity !  
How he does love me ! His poor temples beat  
To the very tune of love—how sweet, sweet, sweet !  
Revive, dear youth, or I shall faint and die ;  
Revive, or these soft hours will hurry by  
In tranced dullness ; speak, and let that spell  
Affright this lethargy ! I cannot quell  
Its heavy pressure, and will press at least  
My lips to thine, that they may richly feast  
Until we taste the life of love again.  
What ! dost thou move ? dost kiss ? O bliss ! O pain !  
I love thee, youth, more than I can conceive ;  
And so long absence from thee doth bereave  
My soul of any rest : yet must I hence :  
Yet, can I not to starry eminence  
Uplift thee ; nor for very shame can own  
Myself to thee. Ah, dearest ! do not groan,  
Or thou wilt force me from this secrecy,  
And I must blush in heaven. O that I  
Had done it already ! that the dreadful smiles  
At my lost brightness, my impassion'd wiles,  
Had waned from Olympus' solemn height,  
And from all serious Gods ; that our delight  
Was quite forgotten, save of us alone !

And wherefore so ashamed? 'Tis but to atone  
For endless pleasure, by some coward blushes :  
Yet must I be a coward ! Horror rushes  
Too palpable before me—the sad look  
Of Jove—Minerva's start—no bosom shook  
With awe of purity—no Cupid pinion  
In reverence veil'd—my crystalline dominion  
Half lost, and all old hymns made nullity !  
But what is this to love ? Oh ! I could fly  
With thee into the ken of heavenly powers,  
So thou wouldst thus, for many sequent hours,  
Press me so sweetly. Now I swear at once  
That I am wise, that Pallas is a dunce—  
Perhaps her love like mine is but unknown—  
Oh ! I do think that I have been alone  
In chastity ! yes, Pallas has been sighing,  
While every eye saw me my hair uptying  
With fingers cool as aspen leaves. Sweet love !  
I was as vague as solitary dove,  
Nor knew that nests were built. Now a soft kiss—  
Ay, by that kiss, I vow an endless bliss,  
An immortality of passion's thine :  
Ere long I will exalt thee to the shine  
Of heaven ambrosial ; and we will shade  
Ourselves whole summers by a river glade ;  
And I will tell thee stories of the sky,  
And breathe thee whispers of its minstrelsy.  
My happy love will overwing all bounds !  
O let me melt into thee ! let the sounds  
Of our close voices marry at their birth ;  
Let us entwine hoveringly ! O dearth  
Of human words ! roughness of mortal speech !

Lispings empyrean will I sometimes teach  
 Thine honey'd tongue—lute-breathings which I gasp  
 To have thee understand, now while I clasp  
 Thee thus, and weep for fondness—I am pain'd,  
 Endymion : woe ! woe ! is grief contain'd  
 In the very deeps of pleasure, my sole life ?"—  
 Hereat, with many sobs, her gentle strife  
 Melted into a languor. He return'd  
 Entranced vows and tears.

Ye who have yearn'd

With too much passion, will here stay and pity,  
 For the mere sake of truth ; as 'tis a ditty  
 Not of these days, but long ago 'twas told  
 By a cavern wind unto a forest old ;  
 And then the forest told it in a dream  
 To a sleeping lake, whose cool and level gleam  
 A poet caught as he was journeying  
 To Phœbus' shrine ; and in it he did fling  
 His weary limbs, bathing an hour's space,  
 And after, straight in that inspired place  
 He sang the story up into the air,  
 Giving it universal freedom. There  
 Has it been ever sounding for those ears  
 Whose tips are glowing hot. The legend cheers  
 Yon sentinel stars ; and he who listens to it  
 Must surely be self-doom'd or he will rue it :  
 For quenchless burnings come upon the heart,  
 Made fiercer by a fear lest any part  
 Should be engulfed in the eddying wind.  
 As much as here is penn'd doth always find  
 A resting-place, thus much comes clear and plain ;

Anon the strange voice is upon the wane—  
And 'tis but echoed from departing sound,  
That the fair visitant at last unwound  
Her gentle limbs, and left the youth asleep.—  
Thus the tradition of the gusty deep.



Now turn we to our former chroniclers.—  
Endymion awoke, that grief of hers  
Sweet paining on his ear: he sickly guess'd  
How lone he was once more, and sadly press'd  
His empty arms together, hung his head,  
And most forlorn upon that widow'd bed  
Sat silently. Love's madness he had known:  
Often with more than tortured lion's groan  
Moanings had burst from him; but now that rage

Had pass'd away : no longer did he wage  
A rough-voiced war against the dooming stars.  
No, he had felt too much for such harsh jars :  
The lyre of his soul Æolian tuned  
Forgot all violence, and but communed  
With melancholy thought : O he had swoon'd  
Drunken from pleasure's nipple ! and his love  
Henceforth was dove-like.—Loth was he to move  
From the imprinted couch, and when he did.  
'Twas with slow, languid paces, and face hid  
In muffling hands. So temper'd, out he stray'd  
Half seeing visions that might have dismay'd  
Alecto's serpents ; ravishments more keen  
Than Hermes' pipe, when anxious he did lean  
Over eclipsing eyes : and at the last  
It was a sounding grotto, vaulted, vast,  
O'erstudged with a thousand, thousand pearls,  
And crimson-mouthed shells with stubborn curls,  
Of every shape and size, even to the bulk  
In which whales harbour close, to brood and sulk  
Against an endless storm. Moreover too,  
Fish-semblances, of green and azure hue,  
Ready to snort their streams. In this cool wonder  
Eudymion sat down, and 'gan to ponder  
On all his life : his youth, up to the day  
When 'mid acclaim, and feasts, and garlands gay,  
He stepp'd upon his shepherd throne : the look  
Of his white palace in wild forest nook.  
And all the revels he had lorded there :  
Each tender maiden whom he once thought fair,  
With every friend and fellow-woodlander—  
Pass'd like a dream before him. Then the spur

Of the old bards to mighty deeds : his plans  
To nurse the golden age 'mong shepherd clans :  
That wondrous night : the great Pan-festival :  
His sister's sorrow ; and his wanderings all,  
Until into the earth's deep maw he rush'd :  
Then all its buried magic, till it flush'd  
High with excessive love. " And now," thought he,  
" How long must I remain in jeopardy  
Of blank amazements that amaze no more ?  
Now I have tasted her sweet soul to the core,  
All other depths are shallow : essences,  
Once spiritual, are like muddy lees,  
Meant but to fertilise my earthly root,  
And make my branches lift a golden fruit  
Into the bloom of heaven ; other light,  
Though it be quick and sharp enough to blight  
The Olympian eagle's vision, is dark,  
Dark as the parentage of chaos. Hark !  
My silent thoughts are echoing from these shells ;  
Or they are but the ghosts, the dying swells  
Of noises far away ?—list !"—Hereupon  
He kept an anxious ear. The humming tone  
Came louder, and behold, there as he lay,  
On either side outgush'd, with misty spray,  
A copious spring ; and both together dash'd  
Swift, mad, fantastic round the rocks, and lash'd  
Among the conchs and shells of the lofty grot,  
Leaving a trickling dew. At last they shot  
Down from the ceiling's height, pouring a noise  
As of some breathless racers whose hopes poise  
Upon the last few steps, and with spent force  
Along the ground they took a winding course.



Endymion follow'd—for it seem'd that one  
Ever pursued, the other strove to shun—  
Follow'd their languid mazes, till well nigh  
He had left thinking of the mystery,—  
And was now rapt in tender hoverings  
Over the vanish'd bliss. Ah! what is it sings  
His dream away? What melodies are these?  
They sound as through the whispering of trees,  
Not native in such barren vaults. Give ear!

“ O Arethusa, peerless nymph! why fear  
Such tenderness as mine? Great Dian, why,  
Why didst thou hear her prayer? O that I  
Were rippling round her dainty fairness now,  
Circling about her waist, and striving how  
To entice her to a dive! then stealing in  
Between her luscious lips and eyelids thin.  
O that her shining hair was in the sun,  
And I distilling from it thence to run  
In amorous rilllets down her shrinking form!  
To linger on her lily shoulders, warm  
Between her kissing breasts, and every charm  
Touch raptured!—See how painfully I flow:  
Fair maid, be pitiful to my great woe.  
Stay, stay thy weary course, and let me lead,  
A happy wooer, to the flowery mead  
Where all that beauty snared me.”—“ Cruel god,  
Desist! or my offended mistress’ nod  
Will stagnate all thy fountains:—tease me not  
With syren words—Ah, have I really got  
Such power to madden thee? And is it true—  
Away, away, or I shall dearly rue  
My very thoughts: in mercy then away,  
Kindest Alpheus, for should I obey  
My own dear will, ’twould be a deadly bane.”—  
“ O, Oread-Queen! would that thou hadst a pain  
Like this of mine, then would I fearless turn  
And be a criminal.”—“ Alas, I burn,  
I shudder—gentle river, get thee hence.  
Alpheus! thou enchanter! every sense  
Of mine was once made perfect in these woods.  
Fresh breezes, bowery lawns, and innocent floods,



Ripe fruits, and lonely couch, contentment gave ;  
But ever since I heedlessly did lave  
In thy deceitful stream, a panting glow  
Grew strong within me : wherefore serve me so,  
And call it love ? Alas ! 'twas cruelty.  
Not once more did I close my happy eyes  
Amid the thrush's song. Away ! avaunt !  
O 'twas a cruel thing."—" Now thou dost taunt  
So softly, Arethusa, that I think  
If thou wast playing on my shady brink,  
Thou wouldst bathe once again. Innocent maid !  
Stifle thine heart no more ;—nor be afraid  
Of angry powers : there are deities  
Will shade us with their wings. Those fitful sighs  
'Tis almost death to hear : O let me pour  
A dewy balm upon them !—fear no more,  
Sweet Arethusa ! Dian's self must feel,  
Sometimes, these very pangs. Dear maiden, steal  
Blushing into my soul, and let us fly  
These dreary caverns for the open sky.  
I will delight thee all my winding course,  
From the green sea up to my hidden source  
About Arcadian forests ; and will show  
The channels where my coolest waters flow  
Through mossy rocks ; where 'mid exuberant green,  
I roam in pleasant darkness, more unseen  
Than Saturn in his exile ; where I brim  
Round flowery islands, and take thence a skim  
Of mealy sweets, which myriads of bees  
Buzz from their honey'd wings : and thou shouldst please  
Thyself to choose the richest, where we might  
Be incense-pillow'd every summer night.

Doff all sad fears, thou white deliciousness,  
And let us be thus comforted ; unless  
Thou couldst rejoice to see my hopeless stream  
Hurry distracted from Sol's temperate beam,  
And pour to death along some hungry sands."—  
"What can I do, Alpheus? Dian stands  
Severe before me : persecuting fate!  
Unhappy Arethusa ! thou wast late  
A huntress free in—" At this, sudden fell  
Those two sad streams adown a fearful dell.  
The Latmian listen'd, but he heard no more,  
Save echo, faint repeating o'er and o'er  
The name of Arethusa. On the verge  
Of that dark gulf he wept, and said : " I urge  
Thee, gentle Goddess of my pilgrimage,  
By our eternal hopes, to soothe, to assuage,  
If thou art powerful, these lovers' pains ;  
And make them happy in some happy plains."

He turn'd—there was a whelming sound—he stept,  
There was a cooler light ; and so he kept  
Towards it by a sandy path, and lo !  
More suddenly than doth a moment go,  
The visions of the earth were gone and fled—  
He saw the giant sea above his head.



BOOK III.



### BOOK III.



THERE are who lord it o'er their fellow-men  
With most prevailing tinsel: who unpen  
Their baaing vanities, to browse away  
The comfortable green and juicy hay  
From human pastures; or, O torturing fact!  
Who, through an idiot blink, will see unpack'd  
Fire-branded foxes to sear up and singe  
Our gold and ripe-ear'd hopes. With not one tinge  
Of sanctuary splendour, not a sight  
Able to face an owl's, they still are dight  
By the blear-eyed nations in empurpled vests,  
And crowns, and turbans. With unladen breasts.  
Save of blown self-applause, they proudly mount  
To their spirit's perch, their being's high account.  
Their tiptop nothings, their dull skies, their thrones—  
Amid the fierce intoxicating tones  
Of trumpets, shoutings, and belabour'd drums.  
And sudden cannon. Ah! how all this hums,  
In wakeful ears, like uproar past and gone—  
Like thunder-clouds that spake to Babylon,

And set those old Chaldeans to their tasks.—  
Are then regalities all gilded masks ?  
No, there are throned seats unscalable  
But by a patient wing, a constant spell,  
Or by ethereal things that, unconfined,  
Can make a ladder of the eternal wind,  
And poise about in cloudy thunder-tents  
To watch the abysm-birth of elements.  
Ay, 'bove the withering of old-lipp'd Fate  
A thousand Powers keep religious state,  
In water, fiery realm, and airy bourne ;  
And, silent as a consecrated urn,  
Hold sphery sessions for a season due.  
Yet few of these far majesties, ah, few !  
Have bared their operations to this globe—  
Few, who with gorgeous pageantry enrobe  
Our piece of heaven—whose benevolence  
Shakes hand with our own Ceres ; every sense  
Filling with spiritual sweets to plenitude,  
As bees gorge full their cells. And by the feud  
'Twixt Nothing and Creation, I here swear,  
Eterne Apollo ! that thy Sister fair  
Is of all these the gentlier-mightiest.  
When thy gold breath is misting in the west,  
She unobserved steals unto her throne,  
And there she sits most meek and most alone ;  
As if she had not pomp subservient ;  
As if thine eye, high Poet ! was not bent  
Towards her with the Muses in thine heart ;  
As if the minist'ring stars kept not apart,  
Waiting for silver-footed messages.  
O Moon ! the oldest shades 'mong oldest trees

Feel palpitations when thou lookest in :  
 O Moon ! old boughs lisp forth a holier din  
 The while they feel thine airy fellowship.  
 Thou dost bless everywhere, with silver lip  
 Kissing dead things to life. The sleeping kine,  
 Couch'd in thy brightness, dream of fields divine :  
 Innumerable mountains rise, and rise,  
 Ambitious for the hallowing of thine eyes ;  
 And yet thy benediction passeth not  
 One obscure hiding-place, one little spot  
 Where pleasure may be sent : the nested wren  
 Has thy fair face within its tranquil ken,  
 And from beneath a sheltering ivy leaf  
 Takes glimpses of thee ; thou art a relief  
 To the poor patient oyster, where it sleeps  
 Within its pearly house ;—The mighty deeps,  
 The monstrous sea is thine—the myriad sea !  
 O Moon ! far spooming Ocean bows to thee,  
 And Tellus feels her forehead's cumbrous load.

Cynthia ! where art thou now ? What far abode  
 Of green or silvery bower doth enshrine  
 Such utmost beauty ? Alas, thou dost pine  
 For one as sorrowful : thy cheek is pale  
 For one whose cheek is pale : thou dost bewail  
 His tears who weeps for thee ! Where dost thou sigh ?  
 Ah ! surely that light peeps from Vesper's eye,  
 Or, what a thing is love ! 'Tis She, but lo !  
 How changed, how full of ache, how gone in woe !  
 She dies at the thinnest cloud ; her loveliness  
 Is wan on Neptune's blue : yet there's a stress  
 Of love-spangles, just off yon cape of trees,

Dancing upon the waves, as if to please  
 The curly foam with amorous influence.  
 O, not so idle! for down glancing thence,  
 She fathoms eddies, and runs wild about  
 O'erwhelming water-courses; scaring out  
 The thorny sharks from hiding-holes, and fright'ning  
 Their savage eyes with unaccustom'd lightning.  
 Where will the splendour be content to reach?  
 O love! how potent hast thou been to teach  
 Strange journeyings! Wherever beauty dwells,  
 In gulf or aerie, mountains or deep dells,  
 In light, in gloom, in star or blazing sun,  
 Thou pointest out the way, and straight 'tis won.  
 Amid his toil thou gavest Leander breath;  
 Thou leddest Orpheus through the gleams of death;  
 Thou madest Pluto bear thin clement:  
 And now, O winged Chieftain! thou hast sent  
 A moonbeam to the deep, deep water-world,  
 To find Endymion.

On gold saud impearl'd  
 With lily shells, and pebbles milky white,  
 Poor Cynthia greeted him, and soothed her light  
 Against his pallid face: he felt the charm  
 To breathlessness, and suddenly a warm  
 Of his heart's blood: 'twas very sweet; he stay'd  
 His wandering steps, and half-entranced laid  
 His head upon a tuft of straggling weeds,  
 To taste the gentle moon, and freshening beads,  
 Lash'd from the crystal roof by fishes' tails.  
 And so he kept, until the rosy veils  
 Mantling the east, by Aurora's peering hand



Were lifted from the water's breast, and fann'd  
 Into sweet air; and sober'd morning came  
 Meekly through billows:—when like taper-flame  
 Left sudden by a dallying breath of air,  
 He rose in silence, and once more 'gan fare  
 Along his fated way.

Far had he roam'd,  
 With nothing save the hollow vast, that foam'd  
 Above, around, and at his feet; save things  
 More dead than Morpheus' imaginings:  
 Old rusted anchors, helmets, breastplates large  
 Of gone sea-warriors; brazen beaks and targe;  
 Rudders that for a hundred years had lost  
 The sway of human hand; gold vase emboss'd  
 With long-forgotten story, and wherein  
 No reveller had ever dipp'd a chin  
 But those of Saturn's vintage; mouldering scrolls,  
 Writ in the tongue of heaven, by those souls  
 Who first were on the earth; and sculptures rude  
 In ponderous stone, developing the mood  
 Of ancient Nox;—then skeletons of man,  
 Of beast, behemoth, and leviathan,  
 And elephant, and eagle, and huge jaw  
 Of nameless monster. A cold leaden awe  
 These secrets struck into him; and unless  
 Dian had chased away that heaviness,  
 He might have died: but now, with cheered feel,  
 He onward kept; wooing these thoughts to steal  
 About the labyrinth in his soul of love.

“What is there in thee, Moon! that thou shouldst move

My heart so potently ? When yet a child  
I oft have dried my tears when thou hast smiled.  
Thou seem'dst my sister : hand in hand we went  
From eve to morn across the firmament.  
No apples would I gather from the tree,  
Till thou hadst cool'd their cheeks deliciously :  
No tumbling water ever spake romance,  
But when my eyes with thine thereon could dance :  
No woods were green enough, no bower divine,  
Until thou liftedst up thine eyelids fine :  
In sowing-time ne'er would I dibble take,  
Or drop a seed, till thou wast wide awake ;  
And, in the summer-tide of blossoming,  
No one but thee hath heard me blithely sing  
And mesh my dewy flowers all the night.  
No melody was like a passing spright  
If it went not to solemnise thy reign.  
Yes, in my boyhood, every joy and pain  
By thee were fashion'd to the self-same end ;  
And as I grew in years, still didst thou blend  
With all my ardours : thou wast the deep glen ;  
Thou wast the mountain-top—the sage's pen—  
The poet's harp—the voice of friends—the sun ;  
Thou wast the river—thou wast glory won ;  
Thou wast my clarion's blast—thou wast my steed—  
My goblet full of wine—my topmost deed :—  
Thou wast the charm of women, lovely Moon !  
O what a wild and harmonised tune  
My spirit struck from all the beautiful !  
On some bright essence could I lean, and lull  
Myself to immortality : I prest  
Nature's soft pillow in a wakeful rest.

But, gentle Orb! there came a nearer bliss—  
My strange love came—Felicity's abyss!  
She came, and thou didst fade, and fade away—  
Yet not entirely; no, thy starry sway  
Has been an under-passion to this hour.  
Now I begin to feel thine orby power  
Is coming fresh upon me: O be kind!  
Keep back thine influence, and do not blind  
My sovereign vision.—Dearest love, forgive  
That I can think away from thee and live!—  
Pardon me, airy planet, that I prize  
One thought beyond thine argent luxuries!  
How far beyond!" At this a surprised start  
Frosted the springing verdure of his heart;  
For as he lifted up his eyes to swear  
How his own goddess was past all things fair.  
He saw far in the concave green of the sea  
An old man sitting calm and peacefully.  
Upon a weeded rock this old man sat,  
And his white hair was awful, and a mat  
Of weeds were cold beneath his cold thin feet;  
And, ample as the largest winding-sheet,  
A cloak of blue wrapp'd up his aged bones,  
O'erwrought with symbols by the deepest groans  
Of ambitious magic: every ocean-form  
Was woven in with black distinctness; storm,  
And calm, and whispering, and hideous roar  
Were emblem'd in the woof; with every shape  
That skims, or dives, or sleeps, 'twixt cape and cape.  
The gulphing whale was like a dot in the spell,  
Yet look upon it, and 'twould size and swell  
To its huge self; and the minutest fish

Would pass the very hardest gazer's wish,  
 And show his little eye's anatomy.  
 Then there was pictured the regality  
 Of Neptune ; and the sea-nymphs round his state,  
 In beauteous vassalage, look up and wait.  
 Beside this old man lay a pearly wand,  
 And in his lap a book, the which he conn'd  
 So steadfastly, that the new denizen  
 Had time to keep him in amazed ken,  
 To mark these shadowings, and stand in awe.

The old man raised his hoary head and saw  
 The wilder'd stranger—seeming not to see,  
 His features were so lifeless. Suddenly  
 He woke as from a trance ; his snow-white brows  
 Went arching up, and like two magic ploughs  
 Furrow'd deep wrinkles in his forehead large,  
 Which kept as fixedly as rocky marge,  
 Till round his wither'd lips had gone a smile.  
 Then up he rose, like one whose tedious toil  
 Had watch'd for years in forlorn hermitage,  
 Who had not from mid-life to utmost age  
 Eased in one accent his o'erburden'd soul,  
 Even to the trees. He rose : he grasp'd his stole,  
 With convulsed clenches waving it abroad,  
 And in a voice of solemn joy, that awed  
 Echo into oblivion, he said :—

“Thou art the man ! Now shall I lay my head  
 In peace upon my watery pillow : now  
 Sleep will come smoothly to my weary brow.  
 O Jove ! I shall be young again, be young !

O shell-borne Neptune, I am pierced and stung  
With new-born life! What shall I do? Where go,  
When I have cast this serpent-skin of woe?—  
I'll swim to the syrens, and one moment listen  
Their melodies, and see their long hair glisten;  
Anon upon that giant's arm I'll be,  
That writhes about the roots of Sicily:  
To northern seas I'll in a twinkling sail,  
And mount upon the snortings of a whale  
To some black cloud; thence down I'll madly sweep  
On forked lightning, to the deepest deep,  
Where through some sucking pool I will be hurl'd  
With rapture to the other side of the world!  
O, I am full of gladness! Sisters three,  
I bow full-hearted to your old decree!  
Yes, every god be thank'd, and power benign,  
For I no more shall wither, droop, and pine.  
Thou art the man!" Endymion started back  
Dismay'd; and like a wretch from whom the rack  
Tortures hot breath, and speech of agony,  
Mutter'd: "What lonely death am I to die  
In this cold region? Will he let me freeze,  
And float my brittle limbs o'er polar seas?  
Or will he touch me with his searing hand,  
And leave a black memorial on the sand?  
Or tear me piecemeal with a bony saw,  
And keep me as a chosen food to draw  
His magian fish through hated fire and flame?  
O misery of hell! resistless, tame,  
Am I to be burn'd up? No, I will shout,  
Until the gods through heaven's blue look out!—  
O Tartarus! but some few days ago

Her soft arms were entwining me, and on  
 Her voice I hung like fruit among green leaves :  
 Her lips were all my own, and—ah, ripe sheaves  
 Of happiness ! ye on the stubble droop,  
 But never may be garner'd. I must stoop  
 My head, and kiss death's foot. Love ! love, farewell !  
 Is there no hope from thee ? This horrid spell  
 Would melt at thy sweet breath.—By Dian's hind  
 Feeding from her white fingers, on the wind  
 I see thy streaming hair ! and now, by Pan,  
 I care not for this old mysterious man ! ”

He spake, and walking to that aged form,  
 Look'd high defiance. Lo ! his heart 'gan warm  
 With pity, for the grey-hair'd creature wept.  
 Had he then wrong'd a heart where sorrow kept ?  
 Had he, though blindly contumelious, brought  
 Rheum to kind eyes, a sting to human thought,  
 Convulsion to a mouth of many years ?  
 He had in truth ; and he was ripe for tears.  
 The penitent shower fell, as down he knelt  
 Before that care-worn sage, who trembling felt  
 About his large dark locks, and faltering spake :

“ Arise, good youth, for sacred Phœbus' sake !  
 I know thine inmost bosom, and I feel  
 A very brother's yearning for thee steal  
 Into mine own : for why ? thou openest  
 The prison-gates that have so long oppress'd  
 My weary watching. Though thou know'st it not,  
 Thou art commission'd to this fated spot  
 For great enfranchisement. O weep no more !

I am a friend to love, to loves of yore :  
 Ay, hadst thou never loved an unknown power,  
 I had been grieving at this joyous hour.  
 But even now, most miserable old,  
 I saw thee, and my blood no longer cold  
 Gave mighty pulses : in this tottering case  
 Grew a new heart, which at this moment plays  
 As dancingly as thine. Be not afraid,  
 For thou shalt hear this secret all display'd,  
 Now as we speed towards our joyous task."

So saying, this young soul in age's mask  
 Went forward with the Carian side by side :  
 Resuming quickly thus ; while ocean's tide  
 Hung swollen at their backs, and jewell'd sands  
 Took silently their foot-prints.

" My soul stands

Now past the midway from mortality,  
 And so I can prepare without a sigh  
 To tell thee briefly all my joy and pain.  
 I was a fisher once, upon this main,  
 And my boat danced in every creek and bay ;  
 Rough billows were my home by night and day,—  
 The sea-gulls not more constant ; for I had  
 No housing from the storm and tempests mad,  
 But hollow rocks,—and they were palaces  
 Of silent happiness, of slumberous ease :  
 Long years of misery have told me so.  
 Ay, thus it was one thousand years ago.  
 One thousand years!—Is it then possible  
 To look so plainly through them ? to dispel

A thousand years with backward glance sublime?  
To breathe away as 'twere all scummy slime  
From off a crystal pool, to see its deep,  
And one's own image from the bottom peep?  
Yes: now I am no longer wretched thrall,  
My long captivity and moanings all  
Are but a slime, a thin-pervading scum,  
The which I breathe away, and thronging come  
Like things of yesterday my youthful pleasures.

“ I touch'd no lute, I sang not, trod no measures:  
I was a lonely youth on desert shores.  
My sports were lonely, 'mid continuous roars,  
And craggy isles, and seamews' plaintive cry  
Plaining discrepant between sea and sky.  
Dolphins were still my playmates; shapes unseen  
Would let me feel their scales of gold and green,  
Nor be my desolation; and, full oft,  
When a dread waterspout had rear'd aloft  
Its hungry hugeness, seeming ready ripe  
To burst with hoarsest thunderings, and wipe  
My life away like a vast sponge of fate,  
Some friendly monster, pitying my sad state,  
Has dived to its foundations, gulf'd it down,  
And left me tossing safely. But the crown  
Of all my life was utmost quietude:  
More did I love to lie in cavern rude,  
Keeping in wait whole days for Neptune's voice,  
And if it came at last, hark, and rejoice!  
There blush'd no summer eve but I would steer  
My skiff along green shelving coasts, to hear  
The shepherd's pipe come clear from acry steep,



Mingled with ceaseless bleatings of his sheep :  
 And never was a day of summer shine,  
 But I beheld its birth upon the brine :  
 For I would watch all night to see unfold  
 Heaven's gates, and Æthon snort his morning gold  
 Wide o'er the swelling streams : and constantly  
 At brim of day-tide, on some grassy lea,  
 My nets would be spread out, and I at rest.  
 The poor folk of the sea-country I blest  
 With daily boon of fish most delicate :  
 They knew not whence this bounty, and elate  
 Would strew sweet flowers on a sterile beach.

“ Why was I not contented ? Wherefore reach  
 At things which, but for thee, O Latmian !  
 Had been my dreary death ! Fool ! I began  
 To feel distemper'd longings : to desire  
 The utmost privilege that ocean's sire  
 Could grant in benediction : to be free  
 Of all his kingdom. Long in misery  
 I wasted, ere in one extremest fit  
 I plunged for life or death. To interknit  
 One's senses with so dense a breathing stuff  
 Might seem a work of pain ; so not enough  
 Can I admire how crystal-smooth it felt,  
 And buoyant round my limbs. At first I dwelt  
 Whole days and days in sheer astonishment ;  
 Forgetful utterly of self-intent ;  
 Moving but with the mighty ebb and flow.  
 Then, like a new-fledged bird that first doth show  
 His spreaded feathers to the morrow chill.  
 I tried in fear the pinions of my will.

'Twas freedom ! and at once I visited  
 The ceaseless wonders of this ocean-bed.  
 No need to tell thee of them, for I see  
 That thou hast been a witness—it must be  
 For these I know thou canst not feel a drouth,  
 By the melancholy corners of that mouth.  
 So I will in my story straightway pass  
 To more immediate matter. Woe, alas !  
 That love should be my bane ! Ah, Scylla fair !  
 Why did poor Glaucus ever—ever dare  
 To sue thee to his heart ? Kind stranger-youth !  
 I loved her to the very white of truth,  
 And she would not conceive it. Timid thing !  
 She fled me swift as sea-bird on the wing,  
 Round every isle, and point, and promontory,  
 From where large Hercules wound up his story  
 Far as Egyptian Nile. My passion grew  
 The more, the more I saw her dainty hue  
 Gleam delicately through the azure clear :  
 Until 'twas too fierce agony to bear ;  
 And in that agony, across my grief  
 It flash'd, that Circe might find some relief—  
 Cruel enchantress ! So above the water  
 I rear'd my head, and look'd for Phœbus' daughter.  
 Ææa's isle was wondering at the moon :—  
 It seem'd to whirl around me, and a swoon  
 Left me dead-drifting to that fatal power.

“ When I awoke, 'twas in a twilight bower ;  
 Just when the light of morn, with hum of bees,  
 Stole through its verdurous matting of fresh trees.  
 How sweet, and sweeter ! for I heard a lyre,

And over it a sighing voice expire.  
It ceased—I caught light footsteps ; and anon  
The fairest face that morn e'er look'd upon  
Push'd through a screen of roses. Starry Jove !  
With tears, and smiles, and honey-words she wove  
A net whose thralldom was more bliss than all  
The range of flower'd Elysium. Thus did fall  
The dew of her rich speech : ' Ah ! art awake ?  
O let me hear thee speak, for Cupid's sake !  
I am so oppress'd with joy ! Why, I have shed  
An urn of tears, as though thou wert cold dead ;  
And now I find thee living, I will pour  
From these devoted eyes their silver store,  
Until exhausted of the latest drop,  
So it will pleasure thee, and force thee stop  
Here, that I too may live : but if beyond  
Such cool and sorrowful offerings, thou art fond  
Of soothing warmth, of dalliance supreme ;  
If thou art ripe to taste a long love-dream ;  
If smiles, if dimples, tongues for ardour mute,  
Hang in thy vision like a tempting fruit,  
O let me pluck it for thee ! ' Thus she link'd  
Her charming syllables, till indistinct  
Their music came to my o'er-sweeten'd soul ;  
And then she hover'd over me, and stole  
So near, that if no nearer it had been  
This furrow'd visage thou hadst never seen.

“ Young man of Latmos ! thus particular  
Am I, that thou may'st plainly see how far  
This fierce temptation went : and thou may'st not  
Exclaim, How, then, was Scylla quite forgot ?

" Who could resist ? Who in this universe ?  
 She did so breathe ambrosia ; so immerse  
 My fine existence in a golden elime.  
 She took me like a child of suckling time,  
 And cradled me in roses. Thus condemn'd,  
 The current of my former life was stemm'd,  
 And to this arbitrary queen of sense  
 I bow'd a tranced vassal : nor would thence  
 Have moved, even though Amphion's harp had woo'd  
 Me back to Scylla o'er the billows rude.  
 For as Apollo each eve doth devise  
 A new apparelling for western skies ;  
 So every eve, nay, every spendthrift hour  
 Shed balmy consciousness within that bower.  
 And I was free of haunts umbrageous ;  
 Could wander in the mazy forest-house  
 Of squirrels, foxes shy, and antler'd deer,  
 And birds from coverts innermost and drear  
 Warbling for very joy mellifluous sorrow—  
 To me new-born delights !

" Now let me borrow,  
 For moments few, a temperament as stern  
 As Pluto's sceptre, that my words not burn  
 These uttering lips, while I in calm speech tell  
 How specious heaven was changed to real hell.

" One morn she left me sleeping : half awake  
 I sought for her smooth arms and lips, to slake  
 My greedy thirst with nectarous camel-draughts ;  
 But she was gone. Whereat the barbed shafts  
 Of disappointment stuck in me so sore,

That out I ran and search'd the forest o'er.  
Wandering about in pine and cedar gloom  
Damp awe assail'd me, for there 'gan to boom  
A sound of moan, an agony of sound,  
Sepulchral from the distance all around.  
Then came a conquering earth-thunder, and rumbled  
That fierce complain to silence : while I stumbled  
Down a precipitous path, as if impell'd.  
I came to a dark valley.—Groanings swell'd  
Poisonous about my ears, and louder grew,  
The nearer I approach'd a flame's gaunt blue,  
That glared before me through a thorny brake.  
This fire, like the eye of gordian snake,  
Bewitch'd me towards ; and I soon was near  
A sight too fearful for the feel of fear :  
In thicket hid I cursed the haggard scene—  
The banquet of my arms, my arbour queen,  
Seated upon an uptorn forest root ;  
And all around her shapes, wizard and brute,  
Laughing, and wailing, grovelling, serpentine,  
Showing tooth, tusk, and venom-bag, and sting.  
O such deformities ! old Charon's self,  
Should he give up awhile his penny pelf,  
And take a dream 'mong rushes Stygian,  
It could not be so fantasied. Fierce, wan,  
And tyrannising was the lady's look,  
As over them a gnarled staff she shook.  
Oft-times upon the sudden she laugh'd out,  
And from a basket emptied to the rout  
Clusters of grapes, the which they raven'd quick  
And roar'd for more ; with many a hungry lick  
About their shaggy jaws. Avenging, slow,

Anon she took a branch of mistletoe,  
And emptied on 't a black dull-gurgling phial :  
Groan'd one and all, as if some piercing trial  
Was sharpening for their pitiable bones.  
She lifted up the charm : appealing groans  
From their poor breasts went suing to her ear  
In vain ; remorseless as an infant's bier  
She whisk'd against their eyes the sooty oil.  
Whereat was heard a noise of painful toil,  
Increasing gradual to a tempest rage,  
Shrieks, yells, and groans of torture-pilgrimage ;  
Until their grieved bodies 'gan to bloat  
And puff from the tail's end to stifled throat :  
Then was appalling silence : then a sight  
More wildering than all that hoarse affright ;  
For the whole herd, as by a whirlwind writthen,  
Went through the dismal air like one huge Python  
Antagonising Boreas,—and so vanish'd,  
Yet there was not a breath of wind : she banish'd  
These phantoms with a nod. Lo ! from the dark  
Came waggish fauns, and nymphs, and satyrs stark,  
With dancing and loud revelry,—and went  
Swifter than centaurs after rapine bent.—  
Sighing an elephant appear'd and bow'd  
Before the fierce witch, speaking thus aloud  
In human accent : ' Potent goddess ! chief  
Of pains resistless ! make my being brief,  
Or let me from this heavy prison fly :  
Or give me to the air, or let me die !  
I sue not for my happy crown again ;  
I sue not for my phalanx on the plain ;  
I sue not for my lone, my widow'd wife :

I sue not for my ruddy drops of life,  
 My children fair, my lovely girls and boys !  
 I will forget them ; I will pass these joys ;  
 Ask nought so heavenward, so too—too high :  
 Only I pray, as fairest boon, to die,  
 Or be deliver'd from this cumbrous flesh,  
 From this gross, detestable, filthy mesh,  
 And merely given to the cold bleak air.  
 Have mercy, Goddess ! Circe, feel my prayer !'

“ That curst magician's name fell icy numb  
 Upon my wild conjecturing : truth had come  
 Naked and sabre-like against my heart.  
 I saw a fury whetting a death-dart ;  
 And my slain spirit, overwrought with fright,  
 Fainted away in that dark lair of night.  
 Think, my deliverer, how desolate  
 My waking must have been ! disgust and hate.  
 And terrors manifold divided me  
 A spoil amongst them. I prepared to flee  
 Into the dungeon core of that wild wood :  
 I fled three days—when lo ! before me stood  
 Glaring the angry witch. O Dis, even now,  
 A clammy dew is beading on my brow,  
 At mere remembering her pale laugh, and curse.  
 ‘ Ha ! ha ! Sir Dainty ! there must be a nurse  
 Made of rose-leaves and thistle-down, express,  
 To cradle thee, my sweet, and lull thee : yes,  
 I am too flinty-hard for thy nice touch :  
 My tenderest squeeze is but a giant's clutch.  
 So, fairy-thing, it shall have lullabies  
 Unheard of yet ; and it shall still its cries

Upon some breast more lily-feminine.  
Oh, no—it shall not pine, and pine, and pine  
More than one pretty, trifling thousand years ;  
And then 'twere pity, but fate's gentle shears  
Cut short its immortality. Sea-flirt !  
Young dove of the waters ! truly I'll not hurt  
One hair of thine : see how I weep and sigh,  
That our heart-broken parting is so nigh.  
And must we part ? Ah, yes, it must be so.  
Yet ere thou leavest me in utter woe,  
Let me sob over thee my last adieus,  
And speak a blessing : Mark me ! thou hast thews  
Immortal, for thou art of heavenly race :  
But such a love is mine, that here I chase  
Eternally away from thee all bloom  
Of youth, and destine thee towards a tomb.  
Hence shalt thou quickly to the watery vast ;  
And there, ere many days be overpast,  
Disabled age shall seize thee ; and even then  
Thou shalt not go the way of aged men ;  
But live and wither, cripple and still breathe  
Ten hundred years : which gone, I then bequeath  
Thy fragile bones to unknown burial.  
Adieu, sweet love, adieu !'—As shot stars fall,  
She fled ere I could groan for mercy. Stung  
And poison'd was my spirit : despair sung  
A war-song of defiance 'gainst all hell.  
A hand was at my shoulder to compel  
My sullen steps ; another 'fore my eyes  
Moved on with pointed finger. In this guise  
Enforced, at the last by ocean's foam  
I found me ; by my fresh, my native home,



Its tempering coolness, to my life akin,  
 Came salutary as I waded in ;  
 And, with a blind voluptuous rage, I gave  
 Battle to the swollen billow-ridge, and drave  
 Large froth before me, while there yet remain'd  
 Hale strength, nor from my bones all marrow drain'd.

“ Young lover, I must weep—such hellish spite  
 With dry cheek who can tell ? While thus my might  
 Proving upon this element, dismay'd,  
 Upon a dead thing's face my hand I laid ;  
 I look'd—'twas Scylla ! Cursed, cursed Circe !  
 O vulture-witch, hast never heard of mercy !  
 Could not thy harshest vengeance be content,  
 But thou must nip this tender innocent  
 Because I loved her ?—Cold, O cold indeed  
 Were her fair limbs, and like a common weed  
 The sea-swell took her hair. Dead as she was  
 I clung about her waist, nor ceased to pass  
 Fleet as an arrow through unfathom'd brine,  
 Until there shone a fabric crystalline,  
 Ribb'd and inlaid with coral, pebble, and pearl.  
 Headlong I darted ; at one eager swirl  
 Gain'd its bright portal, enter'd, and behold !  
 'Twas vast, and desolate, and icy-cold ;  
 And all around—But wherefore this to thee  
 Who in few minutes more thyself shalt see ?—  
 I left poor Scylla in a niche and fled.  
 My fever'd parchings up, my scathing dread  
 Met palsy half way : soon these limbs became  
 Gaunt, wither'd, sapless, feeble, cramp'd, and lame.

“ Now let me pass a cruel, cruel space,  
 Without one hope, without one faintest trace  
 Of mitigation, or redeeming bubble  
 Of colour'd phantasy ; for I fear 'twould trouble  
 Thy brain to loss of reason : and next tell  
 How a restoring chance came down to quell  
 One half of the witch in me.

“ On a day,  
 Sitting upon a rock above the spray,  
 I saw grow up from the horizon's brink  
 A gallant vessel : soon she seem'd to sink  
 Away from me again, as though her course  
 Had been resumed in spite of hindering force—  
 So vanish'd : and not long, before arose  
 Dark clouds, and muttering of winds morose.  
 Old Æolus would stifle his mad spleen,  
 But could not, therefore, all the billows green  
 Toss'd up the silver spume against the clouds.  
 The tempest came : I saw that vessel's shrouds  
 In perilous bustle ; while upon the deck  
 Stood trembling creatures. I beheld the wreck ;  
 The final gulging ; the poor struggling souls ;  
 I heard their cries amid loud thunder-rolls.  
 O they had all been saved but crazed old  
 Annul'd my vigorous cravings : and thus quell'd  
 And curb'd, think on 't, O Latmian ! did I sit  
 Writhing with pity, and a cursing fit  
 Against that hell-born Circe. The crew had gone,  
 By one and one, to pale oblivion ;  
 And I was gazing on the surges prone,  
 With many a scalding tear, and many a groan,

When at my feet emerged an old man's hand,  
Grasping this scroll, and this same slender wand.  
I knelt with pain—reach'd out my hand—had grasp'd  
These treasures—touch'd the knuckles—they unclasp'd—  
I caught a finger: but the downward weight  
O'erpower'd me—it sank. Then 'gan abate  
The storm, and through chill aguish gloom outburst  
The comfortable sun. I was athirst  
To search the book, and in the warming air  
Parted its dripping leaves with eager care.  
Strange matters did it treat of, and drew on  
My soul page after page, till well nigh wou  
Into forgetfulness; when, stupified,  
I read these words, and read again, and tried  
My eyes against the heavens, and read again.  
O what a load of misery and pain  
Each Atlas-line bore off!—a shine of hope  
Came gold around me, cheering me to cope  
Strenuous with hellish tyranny. Attend!  
For thou hast brought their promise to an end.

“ ‘In the wide sea there lives a forlorn wretch,  
Doom'd with enfeebled carcase to outstretch  
His loathed existence through ten centuries,  
And then to die alone. Who can devise  
A total opposition? No one. So  
One million times ocean must ebb and flow,  
And he oppressed. Yet he shall not die,  
These things accomplish'd:—If he utterly  
Scans all the depths of magic, and expounds  
The meanings of all motions, shapes, and sounds;  
If he explores all forms and substances

Straight homeward to their symbol-essences ;  
 He shall not die. Moreover, and in chief,  
 He must pursue this task of joy and grief  
 Most piously ;—all lovers tempest-tost,  
 And in the savage overwhelming lost,  
 He shall deposit side by side, until  
 Time's creeping shall the dreary space fulfil :  
 Which done, and all these labours ripened,  
 A youth, by heavenly power loved and led,  
 Shall stand before him ; whom he shall direct  
 How to consummate all. The youth elect  
 Must do the thing, or both will be destroy'd.' "

"Then," cried the young Endymion, overjoy'd,  
 "We are twin brothers in this destiny !  
 Say, I entreat thee, what achievement high  
 Is, in this restless world, for me reserved.  
 What ! if from thee my wandering feet had swerved,  
 Had we both perish'd ?"—"Look !" the sage replied,  
 "Dost thou not mark a gleaming through the tide,  
 Of divers brilliances ? 'tis the edifice  
 I told thee of, where lovely Scylla lies ;  
 And where I have enshrined piously  
 All lovers, whom fell storms have doom'd to die  
 Throughout my bondage." Thus discoursing, on  
 They went till unobscured the porches shone ;  
 Which hurryingly they gain'd, and enter'd straight.  
 Sure never since king Neptune held his state  
 Was seen such wonder underneath the stars.  
 Turn to some level plain where haughty Mars  
 Has legion'd all his battle ; and behold  
 How every soldier, with firm foot, doth hold

His even breast : see, many steeled squares,  
And rigid ranks of iron—whence who dares  
One step? Imagine further, line by line,  
These warrior thousands on the field supine :—  
So in that crystal place, in silent rows,  
Poor lovers lay at rest from joys and woes.  
The stranger from the mountains, breathless, traced  
Such thousands of shut eyes in order placed ;  
Such ranges of white feet, and patient lips  
All ruddy,—for here death no blossom nips.  
He mark'd their brows and foreheads ; saw their hair  
Put sleekly on one side with nicest care ;  
And each one's gentle wrists, with reverence,  
Put cross-wise to its heart.

“ Let us commence  
(Whisper'd the guide, stuttering with joy) even now.”  
He spake, and, trembling like an aspen-bough,  
Began to tear his scroll in pieces small,  
Uttering the while some mumblings funeral.  
He tore it into pieces small as snow  
That drifts unfeather'd when bleak northerns blow ;  
And having done it, took his dark blue cloak  
And bound it round Endymion : then struck  
His wand against the empty air times nine.  
“ What more there is to do, young man, is thine :  
But first a little patience ; first undo  
This tangled thread, and wind it to a clue.  
Ah, gentle! 'tis as weak as spider's skein ;  
And shouldst thou break it—What, is it done so clean ?  
A power overshadows thee ! Oh, brave !  
The spite of hell is tumbling to its grave.

Here is a shell ; 'tis pearly blank to me,  
 Nor mark'd with any sign or character—  
 Canst thou read aught ? O read for pity's sake !  
 Olympus ! we are safe ! Now, Carian, break  
 This wand against yon lyre on the pedestal."

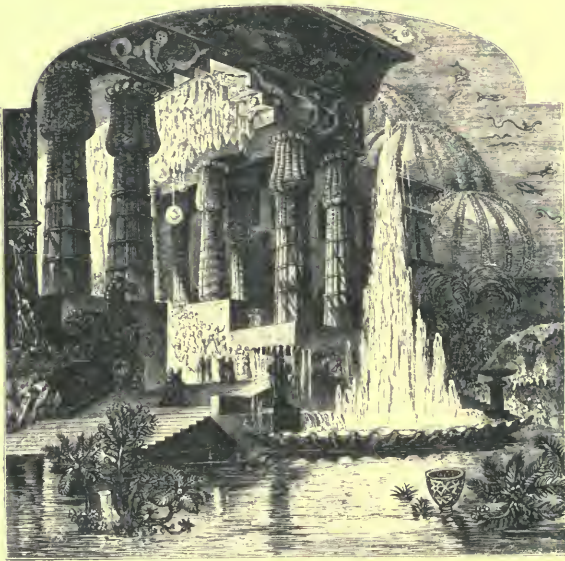
'Twas done : and straight with sudden swell and fall  
 Sweet music breathed her soul away, and sigh'd  
 A lullaby to silence.—" Youth ! now strew  
 These minced leaves on me, and passing through  
 Those files of dead, scatter the same around,  
 And thou wilt see the issue."—'Mid the sound  
 Of flutes and viols, ravishing his heart,  
 Endymion from Glaucus stood apart,  
 And scatter'd in his face some fragments light.  
 How lightning-swift the change ! a youthful wight  
 Smiling beneath a coral diadem,  
 Out-sparkling sudden like an upturn'd gem,  
 Appear'd, and, stepping to a beauteous corse,  
 Kneel'd down beside it, and with tenderest force  
 Press'd its cold hand, and wept—and Scylla sigh'd !  
 Endymion, with quick hand, the charm applied—  
 The nymph arose : he left them to their joy,  
 And onward went upon his high employ,  
 Showering those powerful fragments on the dead,  
 And, as he pass'd, each lifted up its head,  
 As doth a flower at Apollo's touch.  
 Death felt it to his inwards ; 'twas too much :  
 Death fell a-weeping in his charnel-house.  
 The Latmian persevered along, and thus  
 All were reanimated. There arose  
 A noise of harmony, pulses and throes

Of gladness in the air—while many, who  
Had died in mutual arms devout and true,  
Sprang to each other madly; and the rest  
Felt a high certainty of being blest.  
They gazed upon Endymion. Enchantment  
Grew drunken, and would have its head and bent.  
Delicious symphonies, like airy flowers,  
Budded, and swell'd, and, full-blown, shed full showers  
Of light, soft, unseen leaves of sounds divine.  
The two deliverers tasted a pure wine  
Of happiness, from fairy press oozed out.  
Speechless they eyed each other, and about  
The fair assembly wander'd to and fro,  
Distracted with the richest overflow  
Of joy that ever pour'd from heaven.

——“ Away!”

Shouted the new-born god; “ Follow, and pay  
Our piety to Neptunus supreme!”—  
Then Scylla, blushing sweetly from her dream,  
They led on first, bent to her meek surprise,  
Through portal columns of a giant size  
Into the vaulted, boundless emerald.  
Joyous all follow'd, as the leader call'd,  
Down marble steps; pouring as easily  
As hour-glass sand—and fast, as you might see  
Swallows obeying the south summer's call,  
Or swans upon a gentle waterfall.

Thus went that beautiful multitude, nor far,  
Ere from among some rocks of glittering spar,  
Just within ken, they saw descending thick



Another multitude. Whereat more quick  
 Moved either host. On a wide sand they met,  
 And of those numbers every eye was wet;  
 For each their old love found. A murmuring rose  
 Like what was never heard in all the throes  
 Of wind and waters: 'tis past human wit  
 To tell; 'tis dizziness to think of it.

This mighty consummation made, the host  
 Moved on for many a league; and gain'd and lost  
 Huge sea-marks; vanward swelling in array,  
 And from the rear diminishing away,



Till a faint dawu surprised them. Glaucus cried,  
“ Behold ! behold, the palace of his pride !  
God Neptune’s palaces.” With noise increased,  
They shoulder’d on towards that brightening east.  
At every onward step proud domes arose  
In prospect, diamond gleams and golden glows  
Of amber ’gainst their faces levelling.  
Joyous, and many as the leaves in spring,  
Still onward ; still the splendour gradual swell’d.  
Rich opal domes were seen, on high upheld  
By jasper pillars, letting through their shafts  
A blush of coral. Copious wonder-draughts  
Each gazer drank ; and deeper drank more near :  
For what poor mortals fragment up, as mere  
As marble was there lavish, to the vast  
Of one fair palace, that far, far surpass’d.  
Even for common bulk, those olden three,  
Memphis, and Babylon, and Nineveh.

As large, as bright, as colour’d as the bow  
Of Iris, when unfading it doth show  
Beyond a silvery shower, was the arch  
Through which this Paphian army took its march,  
Into the outer courts of Neptune’s state :  
Whence could be seen, direct, a golden gate,  
To which the leaders sped ; but not half raught  
Ere it burst open swift as fairy thought,  
And made those dazzled thousands veil their eyes  
Like callow eagles at the first sunrise.  
Soon with an eagle nativeness their gaze  
Ripe from hue-golden swoons took all the blaze,  
And then, behold ! large Neptune on his throne

Of emerald deep : yet not exalt alone ;  
At his right hand stood winged Love, and on  
His left sat smiling Beauty's paragon.

Far as the mariner on highest mast  
Can see all round upon the calmed vast,  
So wide was Neptune's hall : and as the blue  
Doth vault the waters, so the waters drew  
Their doming curtains, high, magnificent,  
Awed from the throne aloof ;—and when storm-rent  
Disclosed the thunder-gloomings in Jove's air ;  
But soothed as now, flash'd sudden everywhere,  
Noiseless, sub-marine cloudlets, glittering  
Death to a human eye : for there did spring  
From natural west, and east, and south, and north,  
A light as of four sunsets, blazing forth  
A gold-green zenith 'bove the Sea-God's head.  
Of lucid depth the floor, and far outspread  
As breezeless lake, on which the slim canoe  
Of feather'd Indian darts about, as through  
The delicatest air : air verily,  
But for the portraiture of clouds and sky :  
This palace floor breath-air,—but for the amaze  
Of deep-seen wonders motionless,—and blaze  
Of the dome pomp, reflected in extremes,  
Globing a golden sphere.

They stood in dreams  
Till Triton blew his horn. The palace rang ;  
The Nereids danced ; the Syrens faintly sang ;  
And the great Sea-King bow'd his dripping head.  
Then Love took wing, and from his pinions shed

On all the multitude a nectarous dew.  
The ooze-born Goddess beckoned and drew  
Fair Scylla and her guides to conference ;  
And when they reach'd the throned eminence  
She kiss'd the sea-nymph's cheek, who sat her down  
A toying with the doves. Then, "Mighty crown  
And sceptre of this kingdom!" Venus said,  
"Thy vows were on a time to Nais paid :  
Behold!"—Two copious tear-drops instant fell  
From the God's large eyes ; he smiled delectable,  
And over Glaucus held his blessing hands.—  
"Endymion! Ah! still wandering in the bands  
Of love? Now this is cruel. Since the hour  
I met thee in earth's bosom, all my power  
Have I put forth to serve thee. What, not yet  
Escaped from dull mortality's harsh net?  
A little patience, youth! 'twill not be long,  
Or I am skillless quite: an idle tongue,  
A humid eye, and steps luxurious,  
Where these are new and strange, are ominous.  
Ay, I have seen these signs in one of heaven,  
When others were all blind; and were I given  
To utter secrets, haply I might say  
Some pleasant words: but Love will have his day.  
So wait awhile expectant. Pr'ythee soon,  
Even in the passing of thine honey-moon,  
Visit my Cytherea: thou wilt find  
Cupid well-natured, my Adonis kind;  
And pray persuade with thee—Ah, I have done,  
All blisses be upon thee, my sweet son!"—  
Thus the fair Goddess: while Endymion  
Knelt to receive those accents haleyon.

Meantime a glorious revelry began  
 Before the Water-Monarch. Nectar ran  
 In courteous fountains to all cups outreach'd ;  
 And plunder'd vines, teeming exhaustless, pleach'd  
 New growth about each shell and pendent lyre ;  
 The which, in entangling for their fire,  
 Pull'd down fresh foliage and coverture  
 For dainty toy. Cupid, empire-sure,  
 Flutter'd and laugh'd, and oft-times through the throng  
 Made a delighted way. Then dance, and song,  
 And garlanding, grew wild ; and pleasure reign'd.  
 In harmless tendrils they each other chain'd,  
 And strove who should be smother'd deepest in  
 Fresh crush of leaves.

O 'tis a very sin  
 For one so weak to venture his poor verse  
 In such a place as this. O do not curse,  
 High Muses ! let him hurry to the ending.

All suddenly were silent. A soft blending  
 Of dulcet instruments came charmingly ;  
 And then a hymn.

“ King of the stormy sea !  
 Brother of Jove, and co-inheritor  
 Of elements ! Eternally before  
 Thee the waves awful bow. Fast, stubborn rock,  
 At thy fear'd trident shrinking, doth unlock  
 Its deep foundations, hissing into foam.  
 All mountain-rivers lost, in the wide home  
 Of thy capacious bosom ever flow.

Thou frownest, and old Æolus thy foe  
 Skulks to his cavern, 'mid the gruff complaint  
 Of all his rebel tempests. Dark clouds faint  
 When, from thy diadem, a silver gleam  
 Slants over blue dominion. Thy bright team  
 Gulfs in the morning light, and scuds along  
 To bring thee nearer to that golden song  
 Apollo singeth, while his chariot  
 Waits at the doors of heaven. Thou art not  
 For scenes like this: an empire stern hast thou;  
 And it hath furrow'd that large front: yet now,  
 As newly come of heaven, dost thou sit  
 To blend and interknit  
 Subdued majesty with this glad time.  
 O shell-born King sublime!  
 We lay our hearts before thee evermore—  
 We sing, and we adore!

“ Breathe softly, flutes;  
 Be tender of your strings, ye soothing lutes;  
 Nor be the trumpet heard! O vain, O vain!  
 Not flowers budding in an April rain,  
 Nor breath of sleeping dove, nor river's flow—  
 No, nor the Æolian twang of Love's own bow,  
 Can mingle music fit for the soft ear  
 Of goddess Cytherea!  
 Yet deign, white Queen of Beauty, thy fair eyes  
 On our soul's sacrifice.

“ Bright-winged Child!  
 Who has another care when thou hast smiled?  
 Unfortunates on earth, we see at last

All death-shadows, and glooms that overcast  
 Our spirits, fann'd away by thy light pinions.  
 O sweetest essence! sweetest of all minions!  
 God of warm pulses, and dishevell'd hair,  
 And panting bosoms bare!  
 Dear unseen light in darkness! eclipser  
 Of light in light! delicious poisoner!  
 Thy venom'd goblet will we quaff until  
 We fill—we fill!  
 And by thy Mother's lips——”

Was heard no more

For clamour, when the golden palace-door  
 Open'd again, and from without, in shone  
 A new magnificence. On oozy throne  
 Smooth-moving came Oceanus the old,  
 To take a latest glimpse at his sheep-fold,  
 Before he went into his quiet cave  
 To muse for ever—Then, a lucid wave,  
 Scoop'd from its trembling sisters of mid-sea,  
 Afloat, and pillowing up the majesty  
 Of Doris, and the Ægean seer, her spouse—  
 Next, on a dolphin, clad in laurel boughs,  
 Theban Amphion leaning on his lute:  
 His fingers went across it—All were mute  
 To gaze on Amphitrite, queen of pearls,  
 And Thetis pearly too.—

The palace whirls

Around giddy Endymion; seeing he  
 Was there far strayed from mortality.  
 He could not bear it—shut his eyes in vain;

Imagination gave a dizzier pain.  
"O I shall die! sweet Venus, be my stay!  
Where is my lovely mistress? Well-away!  
I die—I hear her voice—I feel my wing—"  
At Neptune's feet he sank. A sudden ring  
Of Nereids were about him, in kind strife  
To usher back his spirit into life:  
But still he slept. At last they interwove  
Their cradling arms, and purposed to convey  
Towards a crystal bower far away.

Lo! while slow carried through the pitying crowd,  
To his inward senses these words spake aloud;  
Written in star-light on the dark above:  
"Dearest Endymion! my entire love!  
How have I dwelt in fear of fate; 'tis done—  
Immortal bliss for me too hast thou won.  
Arise then! for the hen-dove shall not hatch  
Her ready eggs, before I'll kissing snatch  
Thee into endless heaven. Awake! awake!"

The youth at once arose: a placid lake  
Came quiet to his eyes; and forest green,  
Cooler than all the wonder he had seen,  
Lull'd with its simple song his fluttering breast.  
How happy once again in grassy nest!







BOOK IV.





#### BOOK IV.



MUSE of my native land! loftiest Muse!  
O first-born on the mountains! By the hues  
Of heaven on the spiritual air begot:  
Long didst thou sit alone in northern grot,  
While yet our England was a wolfish den;  
Before our forests heard the talk of men;  
Before the first of Druids was a child:—  
Long didst thou sit amid our regions wild,  
Rapt in a deep prophetic solitude.  
There came an eastern voice of solemn mood:—  
Yet wast thou patient. Then sang forth the Nine,

Apollo's garland :—yet didst thou divine  
 Such home-bred glory, that they cried in vain,  
 “ Come hither, Sister of the Island ! ” Plain  
 Spake fair Ausonia ; and once more she spake  
 A higher summons :—still didst thou betake  
 Thee to thy native hopes. O thou hast won  
 A full accomplishment ! The thing is done,  
 Which undone, these our latter days had risen  
 On barren souls. Great Muse, thou know'st what prison  
 Of flesh and bone, curbs, and confines, and frets  
 Our spirits' wings : despondency besets  
 Our pillows ; and the fresh to-morrow morn  
 Seems to give forth its light in very scorn  
 Of our dull, uninspired, snail-paced lives.  
 Long have I said, how happy he who shrives  
 To thee ! But then I thought on poets gone,  
 And could not pray :—nor can I now—so on  
 I move to the end in lowliness of heart.—

“ Ah, woe is me ! that I should fondly part  
 From my dear native land ! Ah, foolish maid !  
 Glad was the hour, when, with thee, myriads bade  
 Adieu to Ganges and their pleasant fields !  
 To one so friendless the clear freshet yields  
 A bitter coolness ; the ripe grape is sour :  
 Yet I would have, great gods ! but one short hour  
 Of native air—let me but die at home.”

Endymion to heaven's airy dome  
 Was offering up a hecatomb of vows,  
 When these words reach'd him. Whereupon he bows  
 His head through thorny-green entanglement

Of underwood, and to the sound is bent,  
Anxious as hind towards her hidden fawn.

“ Is no one near to help me ? No fair dawn  
Of life from charitable voice ? No sweet saying  
To set my dull and sadden'd spirit playing !  
No hand to toy with mine ? No lips so sweet  
That I may worship them ? No eyelids meet  
To twinkle on my bosom ? No one dies  
Before me, till from these enslaving eyes  
Redemption sparkles !—I am sad and lost.”

Thou, Carian lord, hadst better have been tost  
Into a whirlpool. Vanish into air,  
Warm mountaineer ! for canst thou only bear  
A woman's sigh alone and in distress ?  
See not her charms ! Is Phœbe passionless ?  
Phœbe is fairer far—O gaze no more :—  
Yet if thou wilt behold all beauty's store,  
Behold her panting in the forest grass !  
Do not those curls of glossy jet surpass  
For tenderness the arms so idly lain  
Amongst them ? Feelest not a kindred pain,  
To see such lovely eyes in swimming search  
After some warm delight, that seems to perch  
Dovelike in the dim cell lying beyond  
Their upper lids ?—Hist !

“ O for Hermes' wand,  
To touch this flower into human shape !  
That woodland Hyacinthus could escape  
From his green prison, and here kneeling down

Call me his queen, his second life's fair crown!  
 Ah me, how I could love!—My soul doth melt  
 For the unhappy youth—Love! I have felt  
 So faint a kindness, such a meek surrender  
 To what my own full thoughts had made too tender,  
 That but for tears my life had fled away!  
 Ye deaf and senseless minutes of the day,  
 And thou, old forest, hold ye this for true,  
 There is no lightning, no authentic dew  
 But in the eye of love: there's not a sound,  
 Melodious howsoever, can confound  
 The heavens and earth in one to such a death  
 As doth the voice of love: there's not a breath  
 Will mingle kindly with the meadow air,  
 Till it has panted round, and stolen a share  
 Of passion from the heart!"—

Upon a bough

He leant, wretched. He surely cannot now  
 Thirst for another love: O impious,  
 That he can even dream upon it thus!  
 Thought he, "Why am I not as are the dead,  
 Since to a woe like this I have been led  
 Through the dark earth, and through the wondrous sea?  
 Goddess! I love thee not the less: from thee  
 By Juno's smile I turn not—no, no, no—  
 While the great waters are at ebb and flow,—  
 I have a triple soul! O fond pretence—  
 For both, for both my love is so immense,  
 I feel my heart is cut in twain for them."

And so he groan'd, as one by beauty slain.

The lady's heart beat quick, and he could see  
Her gentle bosom heave tumultuously.  
He sprang from his green covert : there she lay,  
Sweet as a musk-rose upon new-made hay ;  
With all her limbs on tremble, and her eyes  
Shut softly up alive. To speak he tries :  
“ Fair damsel, pity me ! forgive that I  
Thus violate thy bower's sanctity !  
O pardon me, for I am full of grief—  
Grief born of thee, young angel ! fairest thief !  
Who stolen hast away the wings wherewith  
I was to top the heavens. Dear maid, sith  
Thou art my executioner, and I feel  
Loving and hatred, misery and weal,  
Will in a few short hours be nothing to me,  
And all my story that much passion slew me ;  
Do smile upon the evening of my days ;  
And, for my tortured brain begins to craze,  
Be thou my nurse ; and let me understand  
How dying I shall kiss that lily hand.—  
Dost weep for me ! Then should I be content.  
Scowl on, ye fates ! until the firmament  
Outblackens Erebus, and the full-cavern'd earth  
Crumbles into itself. By the cloud-girth  
Of Jove, those tears have given me a thirst  
To meet oblivion.”—As her heart would burst  
The maiden sobb'd awhile, and then replied :  
“ Why must such desolation betide  
As that thou speakest of ? Are not these green nooks  
Empty of all misfortune ? Do the brooks  
Utter a gorgon voice ? Does yonder thrush,  
Schooling its half-fledged little ones to brush

About the dewy forest, whisper tales?—  
 Speak not of grief, young stranger, or cold snails  
 Will slime the rose to-night. Though if thou wilt,  
 Methinks 'twould be a guilt—a very guilt—  
 Not to companion thee, and sigh away  
 The light—the dusk—the dark—till break of day!”  
 “Dear lady,” said Endymion, “’tis past :  
 I love thee ! and my days can never last.  
 That I may pass in patience still speak :  
 Let me have music dying, and I seek  
 No more delight—I bid adieu to all.  
 Didst thou not after other climates call,  
 And murmur about Indian streams ?”—Then she,  
 Sitting beneath the midmost forest tree,  
 For pity sang this roundelay——

“ O Sorrow !

Why dost borrow

The natural hue of health, from vermeil lips?—

To give maiden blushes

To the white rose bushes ?

Or is it thy dewy hand the daisy tips ?

“ O Sorrow !

Why dost borrow

The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye?—

To give the glow-worm light ?

Or, on a moonless night,

To tinge, on syren shores, the salt sea-spry ?

“ O Sorrow !

Why dost borrow



The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue ?—  
    To give at evening pale  
    Unto the nightingale,  
That thou mayst listen the cold dews among ?

“ O Sorrow !  
    Why dost borrow  
Heart's lightness from the merriment of May ?  
    A lover would not tread  
    A cowslip on the head,  
Though he should dance from eve till peep of day—  
    Nor any drooping flower  
    Held sacred for thy bower,  
Wherever he may sport himself and play.

“ To Sorrow,  
    I bade good morrow,  
And thought to leave her far away behind ;  
    But cheerly, cheerly,  
    She loves me dearly ;  
She is so constant to me, and so kind :  
    I would deceive her,  
    And so leave her,  
But ah ! she is so constant and so kind.

“ Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,  
I sat a weeping : in the whole world wide  
There was no one to ask me why I wept—  
    And so I kept  
Brimming the water-lily cups with tears  
    Cold as my fears.

“ Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,  
 I sat a weeping: what enamour'd bride,  
 Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds,  
     But hides and shrouds  
 Beneath dark palm-trees by a river side ?

“ And as I sat, over the light blue hills  
 There came a noise of revellers: the rills  
 Into the wide stream came of purple hue—  
     'Twas Bacchus and his crew!  
 The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills  
 From kissing cymbals made a merry din—  
     'Twas Bacchus and his kin!  
 Like to a moving vintage down they came,  
 Crown'd with green leaves, and faces all on flame;  
 All madly dancing through the pleasant valley,  
     To scare thee, Melancholy!  
 O then, O then, thou wast a simple name!  
 And I forgot thee, as the berried holly  
 By shepherds is forgotten, when in June,  
 Tall chesnuts keep away the sun and moon:—  
     I rush'd into the folly!

“ Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus stood,  
 Trifling his ivy-dart, in dancing mood,  
     With sidelong laughing;  
 And little rills of crimson wine imbrued  
 His plump white arms, and shoulders, enough white  
     For Venus' pearly bite;  
 And near him rode Silenus on his ass,  
 Pelted with flowers as he on did pass  
     Tipsily quaffing.

“ Whence came ye, merry Damsels ! whence came ye,  
 So many, and so many, and such glee ?  
 Why have ye left your bowers desolate,  
     Your lutes, and gentler fate ?  
 ‘ We follow Bacchus ! Bacchus on the wing,  
     A conquering !



Bacchus, young Bacchus ! good or ill betide,  
 We dance before him thorough kingdoms wide :—  
 Come hither, lady fair, and joined be  
     To our wild minstrelsy !’

“ Whence came ye, jolly Satyrs ! whence came ye.  
 So many, and so many, and such glee ?  
 Why have ye left your forest haunts, why left  
     Your nuts in oak-tree cleft ?—  
 ‘ For wine, for wine we left our kernel tree ;  
 For wine we left our heath, and yellow brooms.  
     And cold mushrooms ;  
 For wine we follow Bacchus through the earth :

Great god of breathless cups and chirping mirth !  
 Come hither, lady fair, and joined be  
     To our mad minstrelsy ! ’

“ Over wide streams and mountains great we went,  
 And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent,  
 Onward the tiger and the leopard pants,  
     With Asian elephants :  
 Onward these myriads—with song and dance,  
 With zebras striped, and sleek Arabians’ prance,  
 Web-footed alligators, crocodiles,  
 Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,  
 Plump infant laughers mimicking the coil  
 Of seamen, and stout galley-rowers’ toil :  
 With toying oars and silken sails they glide,  
     Nor care for wind and tide.

“ Mounted on panthers’ furs and lions’ manes,  
 From rear to van they scour about the plains ;  
 A three days’ journey in a moment done ;  
 And always, at the rising of the sun,  
 About the wilds they hunt with spear and horn,  
     On spleenful unicorn.

“ I saw Osirian Egypt kneel adown  
     Before the vine-wreath crown !  
 I saw parch’d Abyssinia rouse and sing  
     To the silver cymbals’ ring !  
 I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce  
     Old Tartary the fierce !  
 The kings of Ind their jewel-sceptres vail,  
 And from their treasures scatter pearly hail ;

Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans,  
 And all his priesthood moans,  
 Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale.  
 Into these regions came I, following him,  
 Sick-hearted, weary—so I took a whim  
 To stray away into these forests drear,  
     Alone, without a peer :  
 And I have told thee all thou mayest hear.

“ Young Stranger !  
     I've been a ranger  
 In search of pleasure throughout every clime ;  
     Alas ! 'tis not for me :  
     Bewitch'd I sure must be,  
 To lose in grieving all my maiden prime.

“ Come then, Sorrow,  
     Sweetest Sorrow !  
 Like an own babe I nurse thee on my breast :  
     I thought to leave thee,  
     And deceive thee,  
 But now of all the world I love thee best.

“ There is not one.  
     No, no, not one  
 But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid ;  
     Thou art her mother,  
     And her brother,  
 Her playmate, and her wooer in the shade.”

O what a sigh she gave in finishing,  
 And look, quite dead to every worldly thing !

Endymion could not speak, but gazed on her :  
And listen'd to the wind that now did stir  
About the crisped oaks full drearily,  
Yet with as sweet a softness as might be  
Remember'd from its velvet summer song.  
At last he said : " Poor lady ! how thus long  
Have I been able to endure that voice ?  
Fair Melody ! kind Syren ! I've no choice ;  
I must be thy sad servant evermore :  
I cannot choose but kneel here and adore.  
Alas, I must not think—by Phœbe, no !  
Let me not think, soft Angel ! shall it be so ?  
Say, beautifullest, shall I never think ?  
O thou couldst foster me beyond the brink  
Of recollection ! make my watchful care  
Close up its bloodshot eyes, nor see despair !  
Do gently murder half my soul, and I  
Shall feel the other half so utterly !—  
I'm giddy at that cheek so fair and smooth ;  
O let it blush so ever : let it soothe  
My madness ! let it mantle rosy-warm  
With the tinge of love, panting in safe alarm.  
This cannot be thy hand, and yet it is ;  
And this is sure thine other softling—this  
Thine own fair bosom, and I am so near !  
Wilt fall asleep ? O let me sip that tear !  
And whisper one sweet word that I may know  
This is this world—sweet dewy blossom !"—Woe !  
Woe ! Woe to that ENDYMION ! WHERE IS HE ?—  
Even these words went echoing dismally  
Through the wide forest—a most fearful tone,  
Like one repenting in his latest moan ;

And while it died away a shade pass'd by,  
As of a thunder-cloud. When arrows fly  
Through the thick branches, poor ring-doves sleek forth  
Their timid necks and tremble; so these both  
Leant to each other trembling, and sat so  
Waiting for some destruction—when lo!  
Foot-feather'd Mercury appear'd sublime  
Beyond the tall tree tops; and in less time  
Than shoots the slanted hail-storm, down he dropp'd  
Towards the ground; but rested not, nor stopp'd  
One moment from his home: only the sward  
He with his wand light touch'd, and heavenward  
Swifter than sight was gone—even before  
The teeming earth a sudden witness bore  
Of his swift magic. Diving swans appear  
Above the crystal circlings white and clear;  
And catch the cheated eye in wild surprise,  
How they can dive in sight and unseen rise—  
So from the turf outsprang two steeds jet-black,  
Each with large dark blue wings upon his back.  
The youth of Caria placed the lovely dame  
On one, and felt himself in spleen to tame  
The other's fierceness. Through the air they flew,  
High as the eagles. Like two drops of dew  
Exhaled to Phæbus' lips, away they are gone,  
Far from the earth away—unseen, alone,  
Among cool clouds and winds, but that the free  
The buoyant life of song can floating be  
Above their heads, and follow them untired.  
Muse of my native land! am I inspired?  
This is the giddy air, and I must spread  
Wide pinions to keep here; nor do I dread

Or height, or depth, or width, or any chance  
 Precipitous : I have beneath my glance  
 Those towering horses and their mournful freight.  
 Could I thus sail, and see, and thus await  
 Fearless for power of thought, without thine aid ?  
 There is a sleepy dusk, an odorous shade  
 From some approaching wonder, and behold  
 Those winged steeds, with snorting nostrils bold  
 Snuff at its faint extreme, and seem to tire,  
 Dying to embers from their native fire !

There curl'd a purple mist around them ; soon,  
 It seem'd as when around the pale new moon  
 Sad Zephyr droops the clouds like weeping willow :  
 'Twas Sleep slow journeying with head on pillow.  
 For the first time, since he came nigh dead-born  
 From the old womb of night, his cave forlorn  
 Had he left more forlorn ; for the first time,  
 He felt aloof the day and morning's prime—  
 Because into his depth Cimmerian  
 There came a dream, showing how a young man,  
 Ere a lean bat could plump its wintry skin,  
 Would at high Jove's empyreal footstool win  
 An immortality, and how espouse  
 Jove's daughter, and be reckon'd of his house.  
 Now was he slumbering towards heaven's gate,  
 That he might at the threshold one hour wait  
 To hear the marriage melodies, and then  
 Sink downward to his dusky cave again :  
 His litter of smooth semiluculent mist,  
 Diversely tinged with rose and amethyst,  
 Puzzled those eyes that for the centre sought ;



And scarcely for one moment could be caught  
His sluggish form reposing motionless.  
Those two on winged steeds, with all the stress  
Of vision search'd for him, as one would look  
Athwart the shallows of a river nook  
To catch a glance at silver-throated eels,—  
Or from old Skiddaw's top, when fog conceals  
His rugged forehead in a mantle pale,  
With an eye-guess towards some pleasant vale,  
Descry a favourite hamlet faint and far.

These raven horses, though they foster'd are  
Of earth's splenetic fire, dully drop  
Their full-vein'd ears, nostrils blood wide, and stop ;  
Upon the spiritless mist have they outspread  
Their ample feathers, are in slumber dead,—  
And on those pinions, level in mid-air,  
Endymion sleepeth and the lady fair.  
Slowly they sail, slowly as icy isle  
Upon a calm sea drifting: and meanwhile  
The mournful wanderer dreams. Behold! he walks  
On heaven's pavement, brotherly he talks  
To divine powers: from his hand full fain  
Juno's proud birds are pecking pearly grain:  
He tries the nerve of Phæbus' golden bow,  
And asketh where the golden apples grow:  
Upon his arm he braces Pallas' shield,  
And strives in vain to unsettle and wield  
A Jovian thunderbolt: arch Hebe brings  
A full-brimm'd goblet, dances lightly, sings  
And tantalises long; at last he drinks,  
And lost in pleasure, at her feet he sinks,

Touching with dazzled lips her star-light hand,  
He blows a bugle,—an ethereal band  
Are visible above : the Seasons four,—  
Green-kirtled Spring, flush Summer, golden store  
In Autumn's sickle, Winter frosty hoar,  
Join dance with shadowy Hours ; while still the blast,  
In swells unmitigated, still doth last  
To sway their floating morris. “ Whose is this ?  
Whose bugle ? ” he inquires : they smile—“ O Dis !  
Why is this mortal here ? Dost thou not know  
Its mistress' lips ? Not thou ?—'Tis Dian's : lo !  
She rises crescented ! ” He looks, 'tis she,  
His very goddess : good-bye earth, and sea,  
And air, and pains, and care, and suffering ;  
Good-bye to all but love ! Then doth he spring  
Towards her, and awakes—and, strange, o'erhead,  
Of those same fragrant exhalations bred,  
Beheld awake his very dream : the gods  
Stood smiling ; merry Hebe laughs and nods ;  
And Phœbe bends towards him crescented.  
O state perplexing ! On the pinion bed,  
Too well awake, he feels the panting side  
Of his delicious lady. He who died  
For soaring too audacious in the sun,  
Where that same treacherous wax began to run,  
Felt not more tongue-tied than Endymion.  
His heart leapt up as to its rightful throne,  
To that fair-shadow'd passion pulsed its way—  
Ah, what perplexity ! Ah, well a-day !  
So fond, so beauteous was his bed-fellow,  
He could not help but kiss her : then he grew  
Awhile forgetful of all beauty save

Young Phœbe's, golden-hair'd ; and so 'gan crave  
 Forgiveness : yet he turn'd once more to look  
 At the sweet sleeper,—all his soul was shook,—  
 She press'd his hand in slumber ; so once more  
 He could not help but kiss her and adore.  
 At this the shadow wept, melting away.  
 The Latmian started up : “ Bright goddess, stay !  
 Search my most hidden breast ! By truth's own tongue,  
 I have no dædale heart ; why is it wrung  
 To desperation ? Is there nought for me,  
 Upon the bourne of bliss, but misery ? ”

These words awoke the stranger of dark tresses :  
 Her dawning love-look rapt Endymion blesses  
 With 'haviour soft. Sleep yawn'd from underneath.  
 “ Thou swan of Ganges, let us no more breathe  
 This murky phantasm ! thou contented seem'st  
 Pillow'd in lovely idleness, nor dream'st  
 What horrors may discomfort thee and me.  
 Ah, shouldst thou die from my heart-treachery !—  
 Yet did she merely weep—her gentle soul  
 Hath no revenge in it ; as it is whole  
 In tenderness, would I were whole in love !  
 Can I prize thee, fair maid, all price above,  
 Even when I feel as true as innocence !  
 I do, I do.—What is this soul then ? Whence  
 Came it ? It does not seem my own, and I  
 Have no self-passion or identity.  
 Some fearful end must be ; where, where is it ?  
 By Nemesis ! I see my spirit flit  
 Alone about the dark—Forgive me, sweet !  
 Shall we away ? ” He roused the steeds ; they beat

Their wings chivalrous into the clear air,  
Leaving old Sleep within his vapoury lair.

The good-night blush of eve was waning slow,  
And Vesper, risen star, began to throe  
In the dusk heavens silvery, when they  
Thus sprang direct towards the Galaxy.  
Nor did speed hinder converse soft and strange—  
Eternal oaths and vows they interchange,  
In such wise, in such temper, so aloof  
Up in the winds, beneath a starry roof,  
So witless of their doom, that verily  
'Tis well nigh past man's search their hearts to see ;  
Whether they wept, or laugh'd, or grieved, or toy'd—  
Most like with joy gone mad, with sorrow cloy'd.

Full facing their swift flight, from ebon streak,  
The moon put forth a little diamond peak,  
No bigger than an unobserved star,  
Or tiny point of fairy scimeter ;  
Bright signal that she only stoop'd to tie  
Her silver sandals, ere deliciously  
She bow'd into the heavens her timid head.  
Slowly she rose, as though she would have fled,  
While to his lady meek the Carian turn'd,  
To mark if her dark eyes had yet discern'd  
This beauty in its birth—Despair! despair!  
He saw her body fading gaunt and spare  
In the cold moonshine. Straight he seized her wrist ;  
It melted from his grasp ; her hand he kiss'd,  
And, horror! kiss'd his own—he was alone.  
Her steed a little higher soar'd, and then

Dropt hawk-wise to the earth.

There lies a den,

Beyond the seeming confines of the space  
 Made for the soul to wander in and trace  
 Its own existence, of remotest glooms.  
 Dark regions are around it, where the tombs  
 Of buried griefs the spirit sees, but scarce  
 One hour doth linger weeping, for the pierce  
 Of new-born woe it feels more inly smart :  
 And in these regions many a venom'd dart  
 At random flies ; they are the proper home  
 Of every ill : the man is yet to come  
 Who hath not journey'd in this native hell.  
 But few have ever felt how calm and well  
 Sleep may be had in that deep den of all.  
 There anguish does not sting, nor pleasure pall ;  
 Woe-hurricanes beat ever at the gate,  
 Yet all is still within and desolate.  
 Beset with painful gusts, within ye hear  
 No sound so loud as when on curtain'd bier  
 The death-watch tick is stifled. Enter none  
 Who strive therefore ; on the sudden it is won.  
 Just when the sufferer begins to burn,  
 Then it is free to him ; and from an urn,  
 Still fed by melting ice, he takes a draught—  
 Young Semele such richness never quaff'd  
 In her maternal longing. Happy gloom !  
 Dark Paradise ! where pale becomes the bloom  
 Of health by due ; where silence dreariest  
 Is most articulate ; where hopes infest ;  
 Where those eyes are the brightest far that keep

Their lids shut longest in a dreamless sleep.  
 O happy spirit-home! O wondrous soul!  
 Pregnant with such a den to save the whole  
 In thine own depth. Hail, gentle Carian!  
 For, never since thy griefs and woes began,  
 Hast thou felt so content: a grievous feud  
 Hath led thee to this Cave of Quietude.  
 Ay, his lull'd soul was there, although upborne  
 With dangerous speed: and so he did not mourn  
 Because he knew not whither he was going.  
 So happy was he, not the aerial blowing  
 Of trumpets at clear parley from the east  
 Could rouse from that fine relish, that high feast.  
 They stung the feather'd horse; with fierce alarm  
 He flapp'd towards the sound. Alas! no charm  
 Could lift Endymion's head, or he had view'd  
 A skyey mask, a pinion'd multitude,—  
 And silvery was its passing: voices sweet  
 Warbling the while as if to lull and greet  
 The wanderer in his path. Thus warbled they,  
 While past the vision went in bright array.

“ Who, who from Dian's feast would be away?  
 For all the golden bowers of the day  
 Are empty left? Who, who away would be  
 From Cynthia's wedding and festivity?  
 Not Hesperus: lo! upon his silver wings  
 He leans away for highest heaven and sings,  
 Snapping his lucid fingers merrily!—  
 Ah, Zephyrus! art here, and Flora too?  
 Ye tender bibbers of the rain and dew,  
 Young playmates of the rose and daffodil,

Be careful, ere ye enter in, to fill  
 Your baskets high  
 With fennel green, and balm, and golden pines,  
 Savory, latter-mint, and columbines,  
 Cool parsley, basil sweet, and sunny thyme ;  
 Yea, every flower and leaf of every clime,  
 All gather'd in the dewy morning : hie

Away ! fly, fly !—

Crystalline brother of the belt of heaven,  
 Aquarius ! to whom king Jove has given  
 Two liquid pulse streams 'stead of feather'd wings,  
 Two fanlike fountains,—thine illuminings

For Dian play :

Dissolve the frozen purity of air ;  
 Let thy white shoulders silvery and bare  
 Show cold through watery pinions ; make more bright  
 The Star-Queen's crescent on her marriage night :

Haste, haste away !

Castor has tamed the planet Lion, see !  
 And of the Bear has Pollux mastery :  
 A third is in the race ! who is the third,  
 Speeding away swift as the eagle bird ?

The ramping Centaur !

The Lion's mane's on end : the Bear how fierce !  
 The Centaur's arrow ready seems to pierce  
 Some enemy : far forth his bow is bent  
 Into the blue of heaven. He'll be shent,

Pale unrelentor,

When he shall hear the wedding lutes a playing.—  
 Andromeda ! sweet woman ! why delaying  
 So timidly among the stars : come hither !  
 Join this bright throng, and nimbly follow whither

They all are going.

Danae's Son, before Jove newly bow'd,  
 Has wept for thee, calling to Jove aloud.  
 Thee, gentle lady, did he disenthral:  
 Ye shall for ever live and love, for all  
     Thy tears are flowing.—  
 By Daphne's fright, behold Apollo!"—

More

Endymion heard not: down his steed him bore,  
 Prone to the green head of a misty hill.

His first touch of the earth went nigh to kill.  
 "Alas!" said he, "were I but always borne  
 Through dangerous winds, had but my footsteps worn  
 A path in hell, for ever would I bless  
 Horrors which nourish an uneasiness  
 For my own sullen conquering; to him  
 Who lives beyond earth's boundary, grief is dim,  
 Sorrow is but a shadow: now I see  
 The grass; I feel the solid ground—Ah, me!  
 It is thy voice—divinest! Where?—who? who  
 Left thee so quiet on this bed of dew?  
 Behold upon this happy earth we are;  
 Let us aye love each other; let us fare  
 On forest-fruits, and never, never go  
 Among the abodes of mortals here below,  
 Or be by phantoms duped. O destiny!  
 Into a labyrinth now my soul would fly,  
 But with thy beauty will I deaden it.  
 Where didst thou melt to? By thee will I sit  
 For ever: let our fate stop here—a kid



I on this spot will offer: Pan will bid  
Us live in peace, in love and peace among  
His forest wildernesses. I have clung  
To nothing, loved a nothing, nothing seen  
Or felt but a great dream! Oh, I have been  
Presumptuous against love, against the sky,  
Against all elements, against the tie  
Of mortals each to each, against the blooms  
Of flowers, rush of rivers, and the tombs  
Of heroes gone! Against his proper glory  
Has my own soul conspired: so my story  
Will I to children utter, and repent.  
There never lived a mortal man, who bent  
His appetite beyond his natural sphere,  
But starved and died. My sweetest Indian, here,  
Here will I kneel, for thou redeemed hast  
My life from too thin breathing: gone and past  
Are cloudy phantasms. Caverns lone, farewell!  
And air of visions, and the monstrous swell  
Of visionary seas! No, never more  
Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore  
Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast.  
Adieu, my daintiest Dream! although so vast  
My love is still for thee. The hour may come  
When we shall meet in pure elysium.  
On earth I may not love thee, and therefore  
Doves will I offer up, and sweetest store  
All through the teeming year: so thou wilt shine  
On me, and on this damsel fair of mine,  
And bless our simple lives. My Indian bliss!  
My river-lily bud! one human kiss!  
One sigh of real breath—one gentle squeeze,

Warm as a dove's nest among summer trees,  
And warm with dew at ooze from living blood!  
Whither didst melt? Ah, what of that!—all good  
We'll talk about—no more of dreaming.—Now,  
Where shall our dwelling be? Under the brow  
Of some steep mossy hill, where ivy dun  
Would hide us up, although spring leaves were none;  
And where dark yew-trees, as we rustle through,  
Will drop their scarlet-berry cups of dew!  
O thou wouldst joy to live in such a place!  
Dusk for our loves, yet light enough to grace  
Those gentle limbs on mossy bed reclined:  
For by one step the blue sky shouldst thou find,  
And by another, in deep dell below,  
See, through the trees, a little river go  
All in its mid-day gold and glimmering.  
Honey from out the gnarled hive I'll bring,  
And apples, wan with sweetness, gather thee,—  
Cresses that grow where no man may them see,  
And sorrel untorn by the dew-claw'd stag:  
Pipes will I fashion of the syrinx flag,  
That thou mayst always know whither I roam,  
When it shall please thee in our quiet home  
To listen and think of love. Still let me speak;  
Still let me dive into the joy I seek,—  
For yet the past doth prison me. The rill,  
Thou haply mayst delight in, will I fill  
With fairy fishes from the mountain tarn,  
And thou shalt feed them from the squirrel's barn.  
Its bottom will I strew with amber shells,  
And pebbles blue from deep enchanted wells.  
Its sides I'll plant with dew-sweet eglantine,

And honeysuckles full of clear bee-wine.  
 I will entice this crystal rill to trace  
 Love's silver name upon the meadow's face.  
 I'll kneel to Vesta, for a flame of fire ;  
 And to god Phœbus, for a golden lyre ;  
 To Empress Dian, for a hunting-spear ;  
 To Vesper, for a taper silver-clear,  
 That I may see thy beauty through the night ;  
 To Flora, and a nightingale shall light  
 Tame on thy finger ; to the River-gods,  
 And they shall bring thee taper fishing-rods  
 Of gold, and lines of naiads' long bright tress.  
 Heaven shield thee for thine utter loveliness !  
 Thy mossy footstool shall the altar be  
 'Fore which I'll bend, bending, dear love, to thee :  
 Those lips shall be my Delphos, and shall speak  
 Laws to my footsteps, colour to my cheek,  
 Trembling or steadfastness to this same voice,  
 And of three sweetest pleasurings the choice :  
 And that affectionate light, those diamond things,  
 Those eyes, those passions, those supreme pearl springs,  
 Shall be my grief, or twinkle me to pleasure.  
 Say, is not bliss within our perfect seizure ?  
 Oh that I could not doubt !”

The mountaineer

Thus strove by fancies vain and crude to clear  
 His brier'd path to some tranquillity.  
 It gave bright gladness to his lady's eye,  
 And yet the tears she wept were tears of sorrow ;  
 Answering thus, just as the golden morrow  
 Beam'd upward from the valleys of the east :

“ O that the flutter of his heart had ceased,  
Or the sweet name of love had pass'd away!  
Young feather'd tyrant! by a swift decay  
Wilt thou devote this body to the earth:  
And I do think that at my very birth  
I lisp'd thy blooming titles inwardly;  
For at the first, first dawn and thought of thee,  
With uplift hands I bless'd the stars of heaven.  
Art thou not cruel? ever have I striven  
To think thee kind, but ah, it will not do!  
When yet a child, I heard that kisses drew  
Favour from thee, and so I kisses gave  
To the void air, bidding them find out love:  
But when I came to feel how far above  
All fancy, pride, and fickle maidenhood,  
All earthly pleasure, all imagined good,  
Was the warm tremble of a devout kiss,—  
Even then that moment, at the thought of this,  
Fainting I fell into a bed of flowers,  
And languish'd there three days. Ye milder powers,  
Am I not cruelly wrong'd? Believe, believe  
Me, dear Endymion, were I to weave  
With my own fancies garlands of sweet life,  
Thou should'st be one of all. Ah, bitter strife!  
I may not be thy love: I am forbidden—  
Indeed I am—thwarted, affrighted, chidden,  
By things I trembled at, and gorgon wrath.  
Twice hast thou ask'd whither I went: henceforth  
Ask me no more! I may not utter it,  
Nor may I be thy love. We might commit  
Ourselves at once to vengeance; we might die;  
We might embrace and die: voluptuous thought!

Enlarge not to my hunger, or I'm caught  
 In trammels of perverse deliciousness.  
 No, no, that shall not be : thee will I bless,  
 And bid a long adien."

The Carian

No word return'd : both lovelorn, silent, wan,  
 Into the valleys green together went.  
 Far wandering, they were perforce content  
 To sit beneath a fair lone beechen tree ;  
 Nor at each other gazed, but heavily  
 Pored on its hazel cirque of shedded leaves.

Endymion ! unhappy ! it nigh grieves  
 Me to behold thee thus in last extreme :  
 Enskied ere this, but truly that I deem  
 Truth the best music in a first-born song.  
 Thy lute-voiced brother will I sing ere long,  
 And thou shalt aid—hast thou not aided me ?  
 Yes, moonlight Emperor ! felicity  
 Has been thy meed for many thousand years ;  
 Yet often have I, on the brink of tears,  
 Mourn'd as if yet thou wert a forester ;—  
 Forgetting the old tale.

He did not stir

His eyes from the dead leaves, or one small pulse  
 Of joy he might have felt. The spirit culls  
 Unfaded amaranth, when wild it strays  
 Through the old garden-ground of boyish days.  
 A little onward ran the very stream  
 By which he took his first soft poppy dream ;

And on the very bark 'gainst which he leant  
 A crescent he had carved, and round it spent  
 His skill in little stars. The teeming tree  
 Had swoll'n and green'd the pious character,  
 But not ta'en out. Why, there was not a slope  
 Up which he had not fear'd the antelope ;  
 And not a tree, beneath whose rooty shade  
 He had not with his tamed leopards play'd ;  
 Nor could an arrow light, or javelin,  
 Fly in the air where his had never been—  
 And yet he knew it not.

O treachery!

Why does his lady smile, pleasing her eye  
 With all his sorrowing ? He sees her not.  
 But who so stares on him ? His sister sure !  
 Peona of the woods !—Can she endure ?—  
 Impossible—how dearly they embrace !  
 His lady smiles ; delight is in her face ;  
 It is no treachery.

“ Dear brother mine!

Endymion, weep not so ! Why should'st thou pine  
 When all great Latmos so exalt will be ?  
 Thank the great gods, and look not bitterly ;  
 And speak not one pale word, and sigh no more.  
 Sure I will not believe thou hast such store  
 Of grief, to last thee to my kiss again.  
 Thou surely canst not bear a mind in pain,  
 Come hand in hand with one so beautiful.  
 Be happy both of you ! for I will pull  
 The flowers of autumn for your coronals.

Pan's holy priest for young Endymion calls ;  
And when he is restored, thou, fairest dame,  
Shalt be our queen. Now, is it not a shame  
To see ye thus,—not very, very sad ?  
Perhaps ye are too happy to be glad :  
O feel as if it were a common day ;  
Free-voiced as one who never was away.  
No tongue shall ask, whence come ye ? but ye shall  
Be gods of your own rest imperial.  
Not even I, for one whole month, will pry  
Into the hours that have pass'd us by,  
Since in my arbour I did sing to thee.  
O Hermes ! on this very night will be  
A hymning up to Cynthia, queen of light ;  
For the soothsayers old saw yesternight  
Good visions in the air,—whence will befall,  
As say these sages, health perpetual  
To shepherds and their flocks ; and furthermore,  
In Dian's face they read the gentle lore :  
Therefore for her these vesper-carols are.  
Our friends will all be there from nigh and far.  
Many upon thy death have ditties made ;  
And many, even now, their foreheads shade  
With cypress, on a day of sacrifice.  
New singing for our maids shalt thou devise,  
And pluck the sorrow from our huntsmen's brows,  
Tell me, my lady-queen, how to espouse  
This wayward brother to his rightful joys !  
His eyes are on thee bent, as thou didst poise  
His fate most goddess-like. Help me, I pray,  
To lure—Endymion, dear brother, say  
What ails thee ?" He could bear no more, and so

Bent his soul fiercely like a spiritual bow,  
 And twang'd it inwardly, and calmly said :  
 " I would have thee my only friend, sweet maid !  
 My only visitor ! not ignorant though,  
 That those deceptions which for pleasure go  
 'Mong men, are pleasures real as real may be :  
 But there are higher ones I may not see,  
 If impiously an earthly realm I take.  
 Since I saw thee, I have been wide awake  
 Night after night, and day by day, until  
 Of the empyrean I have drunk my fill.  
 Let it content thee, Sister, seeing me  
 More happy than betides mortality.  
 A hermit young, I'll live in mossy eave,  
 Where thou alone shalt come to me, and lave  
 Thy spirit in the wonders I shall tell.  
 Through me the shepherd realm shall prosper well ;  
 For to thy tongue will I all health confide.  
 And for my sake, let this young maid abide  
 With thee as a dear sister. Thou alone,  
 Peona, mayst return to me. I own  
 This may sound strangely : but when, dearest girl,  
 Thou seest it for my happiness, no pearl  
 Will trespass down those cheeks. Companion fair !  
 Wilt be content to dwell with her, to share  
 This sister's love with me ?" Like one resign'd  
 And bent by circumstances, and thereby blind  
 In self-commitment, thus, that meek unknown :  
 " Ay, but a buzzing by my ears has flown,  
 Of jubilee to Dian :—truth I heard !  
 Well then, I see there is no little bird,  
 Tender soever, but is Jove's own care.



Long have I sought for rest, and unaware,  
Behold I find it! so exalted too!  
So after my own heart! I knew, I knew  
There was a place untenanted in it;  
In that same void white Chastity shall sit,  
And monitor me nightly to lone slumber.  
With sanest lips I vow me to the number  
Of Dian's sisterhood; and kind lady,  
With thy good help, this very night shall see  
My future days to her fane consecrate."

As feels a dreamer what doth most create  
His own particular fright, so these three felt:  
Or like one who, in after ages, knelt  
To Lucifer or Baal, when he'd pine  
After a little sleep: or when in mine  
Far under-ground, a sleeper meets his friends  
Who know him not. Each diligently bends  
Towards common thoughts and things for very fear;  
Striving their ghastly malady to cheer,  
By thinking it a thing of yes and no,  
That housewives talk of. But the spirit-blow  
Was struck, and all were dreamers. At the last  
Endymion said: "Are not our fates all cast?  
Why stand we here? Adieu, ye tender pair!  
Adieu!" Whereat those maidens, with wild stare,  
Walk'd dizzily away. Pained and hot  
His eyes went after them, until they got  
Near to a cypress grove, whose deadly maw,  
In one swift moment, would what then he saw  
Engulf for ever. "Stay," he cried, "ah, stay!  
Turn damsels! hist! one word I have to say:

Sweet Indian, I would see thee once again.  
It is a thing I dote on: so I'd fain,  
Peona, ye should hand in hand repair,  
Into those holy groves that silent are  
Behind great Dian's temple. I'll be yon,  
At vesper's earliest twinkle—they are gone—  
But once, once, once again—" At this he prest  
His hands against his face, and then did rest  
His head upon a mossy hillock green  
And so remain'd as he a corpse had been  
All the long day; save when he scantily lifted  
His eyes abroad, to see how shadows shifted  
With the slow move of time,—sluggish and weary  
Until the poplar tops, in journey dreary,  
Had reach'd the river's brim. Then up he rose,  
And, slowly as that very river flows,  
Walk'd towards the temple-grove with this lament:  
" Why such a golden eve? The breeze is sent  
Careful and soft, that not a leaf may fall  
Before the serene father of them all  
Bows down his summer head below the west.  
Now am I of breath, speech, and speed possest,  
But at the setting I must bid adieu  
To her for the last time. Night will strew  
On the damp grass myriads of lingering leaves,  
And with them shall I die; nor much it grieves  
To die, when summer dies on the cold sward.  
Why, I have been a butterfly, a lord  
Of flowers, garlands, love-knots, silly posies,  
Groves, meadows, melodies, and arbour-roses;  
My kingdom's at its death, and just it is  
That I should die with it: so in all this

We miscal grief, bale, sorrow, heart-break, woe,  
What is there to plain of? By Titan's foe  
I am but rightly served." So saying, he  
Tripp'd lightly on, in sort of deathful glee;  
Laughing at the clear stream and setting sun,  
As though they jests had been: nor had he done  
His laugh at nature's holy countenance,  
Until that grove appear'd, as if perchance,  
And then his tongue with sober seemlihed  
Gave utterance as he enter'd: "Ha!" he said,  
"King of the butterflies; but by this gloom,  
And by old Rhadamanthus' tongue of doom,  
This dusk religion, pomp of solitude,  
And the Promethean clay by thief endued,  
By old Saturnus' forelock, by his head  
Shook with eternal palsy, I did wed  
Myself to things of light from infancy;  
And thus to be cast out, thus lorn to die,  
Is sure enough to make a mortal man  
Grow impious." So he inwardly began  
On things for which no wording can be found;  
Deeper and deeper sinking, until drown'd  
Beyond the reach of music: for the choir  
Of Cynthia he heard not, though rough brier  
Nor muffling thicket interposed to dull  
The vesper hymn, far swollen, soft and full,  
Through the dark pillars of those sylvan aisles.  
He saw not the two maidens, nor their smiles,  
Wan as primroses gather'd at midnight  
By ebilly-finger'd spring. Unhappy wight!  
"Endymion!" said Peona, "we are here!  
What wouldst thou ere we all are laid on bier?"

Then he embraced her, and his lady's hand  
Press'd, saying: "Sister, I would have command,  
If it were heaven's will, on our sad fate."  
At which that dark-eyed stranger stood elate  
And said, in a new voice, but sweet as love,  
To Endymion's amaze: "By Cupid's dove,  
And so thou shalt! and by the lily truth  
Of my own breast thou shalt, beloved youth!"  
And as she spake, into her face there came  
Light, as reflected from a silver flame:  
Her long black hair swell'd ampler, in display  
Full golden; in her eyes a brighter day  
Dawn'd blue, and full of love. Aye, he beheld  
Phœbe, his passion! joyous she upheld  
Her lucid bow, continuing thus: "Drear, drear  
Has our delaying been; but foolish fear  
Withheld me first; and then decrees of fate;  
And then 'twas fit that from this mortal state  
Thou shouldst, my love, by some unlook'd-for change  
Be spiritualised. Peona, we shall range  
These forests, and to thee they safe shall be  
As was thy cradle; hither shalt thou flee  
To meet us many a time." Next Cynthia bright  
Peona kiss'd, and bless'd with fair good night:  
Her brother kiss'd her too, and knelt adown  
Before his goddess, in a blissful swoon.  
She gave her fair hands to him, and behold,  
Before three swiftest kisses he had told,  
They vanished far away!—Peona went  
Home through the gloomy wood in wonderment.



LAMIA.





## LAMIA.

### PART I.

UPON a time, before the faery broods  
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,  
Before King Oberon's bright diadem,  
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,  
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns  
From rushes green, and brakes, and cowslipp'd lawns,  
The ever-smitten Hermes empty left  
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft :  
From high Olympus had he stolen light,

On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight  
Of his great summoner, and made retreat  
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.  
For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt  
A nymph, to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt ;  
At whose white feet the languid Tritons pour'd  
Pearls, while on land they wither'd and adored.  
Fast by the springs where she to bathe was wont,  
And in those meads where sometimes she might haunt,  
Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,  
Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to choose.  
Ah, what a world of love was at her feet !  
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat  
Burn'd from his winged heels to either ear,  
That from a whiteness, as the lily clear,  
Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair,  
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders bare.  
From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he flew,  
Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,  
And wound with many a river to its head,  
To find where this sweet nymph prepared her secret bed :  
In vain ; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,  
And so he rested, on the lonely ground,  
Pensive, and full of painful jealousies  
Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.  
There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice,  
Such as once heard, in gentle heart, destroys  
All pain but pity : thus the lone voice spake :  
" When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake !  
When move in a sweet body fit for life,  
And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife  
Of hearts and lips ! Ah, miserable me ! "



The God, dove-footed, glided silently  
 Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his speed,  
 The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,  
 Until he found a palpitating snake,  
 Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,  
 Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue ;  
 Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,  
 Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd ;  
 And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,  
 Dissolved, or brighter shone, or interwreathed  
 Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries —  
 So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,  
 She seem'd at once, some penanced lady elf,  
 Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.  
 Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire  
 Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar :  
 Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet !  
 She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete :  
 And for her eyes—what could such eyes do there  
 But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair ?  
 As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air.  
 Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake  
 Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's sake,  
 And thus ; while Hermes on his pinions lay,  
 Like a stoop'd falcon ere he takes his prey :

“ Fair Hermes ! crown'd with feathers, fluttering light,  
 I had a splendid dream of thee last night :  
 I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold,  
 Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,

The only sad one ; for thou didst not hear  
 The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chanting clear,  
 Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,  
 Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious moan.  
 I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple flakes,  
 Break amorous through the clouds, as morning breaks,  
 And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,  
 Strike for the Cretan isle ; and here thou art !  
 Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the maid ? ”  
 Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd  
 His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired :  
 “ Thou smooth-lipp'd serpent, surely high-inspired !  
 Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy eyes,  
 Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise,  
 Telling me only where my nymph is fled,—  
 Where she doth breathe ! ” “ Bright planet, thou hast said, ”  
 Return'd the snake, “ but seal with oaths, fair God ! ”  
 “ I swear, ” said Hermes, “ by my serpent rod,  
 And by thine eyes, and by thy starry crown ! ”  
 Light flew his earnest words, among the blossoms blown.  
 Then thus again the brilliance feminine :  
 “ Too frail of heart ! for this lost nymph of thine,  
 Free as the air, invisibly, she strays  
 About these thornless wilds ; her pleasant days  
 She tastes unseen ; unseen her nimble feet  
 Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet :  
 From weary tendrils, and bow'd branches green,  
 She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes unseen :  
 And by my power is her beauty veil'd  
 To keep it unaffronted, unassail'd  
 By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,  
 Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear'd Silenus' sighs.

Pale grew her immortality, for woe  
 Of all these lovers, and she grieved so  
 I took compassion on her, bade her steep  
 Her hair in weird syrops, that would keep  
 Her loveliness invisible, yet free  
 To wander as she loves, in liberty.



Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone,  
 If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my boon!"  
 Then, once again, the charmed God began  
 An oath, and through the serpent's ears it ran  
 Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.  
 Ravish'd she lifted her Circean head,  
 Blush'd a live damask, and swift-lipping said,  
 "I was a woman, let me have once more  
 A woman's shape, and charming as before.  
 I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss!  
 Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is.

Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy brow,  
And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even now.”  
The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,  
She breathed upon his eyes, and swift was seen  
Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the green.  
It was no dream ; or say a dream it was,  
Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass  
Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.  
One warm, flush'd moment, hovering, it might seem  
Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he burn'd ;  
Then, lighting on the printless verdure, turn'd  
To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid arm,  
Delicate, put to proof the lithe Caducean charm.  
So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent  
Full of adoring tears and blandishment,  
And towards her stept : she, like a moon in wane,  
Faded before him, cower'd, nor could restrain  
Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower  
That faints into itself at evening hour :  
But the God fostering her chilled hand,  
She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd bland,  
And, like new flowers at morning song of bees,  
Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the lees.  
Into the green-recessed woods they flew ;  
Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do.

Left to herself, the serpent now began  
To change ; her elfin blood in madness ran,  
Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent,  
Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent ;  
Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish drear,  
Hot, glazed, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,

Flash'd phosphorandsharp sparks, without one cooling tear.  
 The colours all inflamed throughout her train,  
 She writhed about, convulsed with scarlet pain :  
 A deep volcanian yellow took the place  
 Of all her milder-mooned body's grace ;  
 And, as the lava ravishes the mead,  
 Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede :  
 Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks and bars,  
 Eclipsed her crescents, and lick'd up her stars :  
 So that, in moments few, she was undrest  
 Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,  
 And rubious-argent : of all these bereft,  
 Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.  
 Still shone her crown ; that vanish'd, also she  
 Melted and disappear'd as suddenly ;  
 And in the air, her new voice luting soft,  
 Cried, " Lycius ! gentle Lycius !" — borne aloft  
 With the bright mists about the mountains hoar  
 These words dissolved : Crete's forests heard no more.

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright,  
 A full-born beauty new and exquisite ?  
 She fled into that valley they pass o'er  
 Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore ;  
 And rested at the foot of those wild hills,  
 The rugged founts of the Peræan rills,  
 And of that other ridge whose barren back  
 Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy rack,  
 South-westward to Cleone. There she stood  
 About a young bird's flutter from a wood,  
 Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,  
 By a clear pool, wherein she passioned

To see herself escaped from so sore ills,  
While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius!—for she was a maid  
More beautiful than ever twisted braid,  
Or sigh'd, or blush'd, or on spring-flower'd lea  
Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy :  
A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore  
Of love deep learned to the red heart's core :  
Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain  
To unperplex bliss from its neighbour pain ;  
Define their pettish limits, and estrange  
Their points of contact, and swift counterchange ;  
Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dispart  
Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art ;  
As though in Cupid's college she had spent  
Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent,  
And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

Why this fair creature chose so fairly  
By the wayside to linger, we shall see ;  
But first 'tis fit to tell how she could muse  
And dream, when in the serpent prison-house,  
Of all she list, strange or magnificent :  
How, ever, where she will'd, her spirit went ;  
Whether to faint Elysium, or where  
Down through tress-lifting waves the Nereids fair  
Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly stair ;  
Or where God Bacchus drains his cups divine,  
Stretch'd out, at ease, beneath a glutinous pine ;  
Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine  
Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzian line.

And sometimes into cities she would send  
Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend ;  
And once, while among mortals dreaming thus,  
She saw the young Corinthian Lycius  
Charioting foremost in the envious race,  
Like a young Jove with calm uneager face,  
And fell into a swooning love of him.  
Now on the moth-time of that evening dim  
He would return that way, as well she knew,  
To Corinth from the shore ; for freshly blew  
The eastern soft wind, and his galley now  
Grated the quay-stones with her brazen prow  
In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle  
Fresh anchor'd ; whither he had been awhile  
To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there  
Waits with high marble doors for blood and incense rare.  
Jove heard his vows, and better'd his desire ;  
For by some freakful chance he made retire  
From his companions, and set forth to walk,  
Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth talk :  
Over the solitary hills he fared,  
Thoughtless, at first, but ere eve's star appear'd  
His phantasy was lost, where reason fades,  
In the calm'd twilight of Platonic shades.  
Lamia beheld him coming, near, more near—  
Close to her passing, in indifference drear,  
His silent sandals swept the mossy green ;  
So neighbour'd to him, and yet so unseen  
She stood : he pass'd, shut up in mysteries,  
His mind wrapp'd like his mantle, while her eyes  
Follow'd his steps, and her neck regal white  
Turn'd—syllabbling thus, “ Ah, Lycius bright !



And will you leave me on the hills alone?  
Lycius look back! and be some pity shown."  
He did; not with cold wonder fearingly,  
But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice;  
For so delicious were the words she sung,



It seem'd he had loved them a whole summer long :  
And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,  
Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,  
And still the cup was full,—while he, afraid  
Lest she should vanish ere his lips had paid  
Due adoration, thus began to adore ;  
Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so sure :  
“ Leave thee alone ! Look back ! Ah, Goddess, see  
Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee !  
For pity do not this sad heart belie—  
Even as thou vanishest so I shall die.  
Stay ! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay !  
To thy far wishes will thy streams obey :  
Stay ! though the greenest woods be thy domain,  
Alone they can drink up the morning rain :  
Though a descended Pleiad, will not one  
Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune  
Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine ?  
So sweetly to these ravish'd ears of mine  
Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou shouldst fade,  
Thy memory will waste me to a shade :—  
For pity do not melt ! ” — “ If I should stay, ”  
Said Lamia, “ here, upon this floor of clay,  
And pain my steps upon these flowers too rough,  
What canst thou say or do of charm enough  
To dull the nice remembrance of my home ?  
Thou canst not ask me with thee here to roam  
Over these hills and vales, where no joy is,—  
Empty of immortality and bliss !  
Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know  
That finer spirits cannot breathe below  
In human climes, and live : Alas ! poor youth,

What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe  
My essence? What serener palaces,  
Where I may all my many senses please,  
And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts appease;  
It cannot be—Adieu!” So said, she rose  
Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick to lose  
The amorous promise of her lone complain,  
Swoon’d murmuring of love, and pale with pain.  
The cruel lady, without any show  
Of sorrow for her tender favourite’s woe,  
But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,  
With brighter eyes and slow amenity,  
Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh  
The life she had so tangled in her mesh:  
And as he from one trance was wakening  
Into another, she began to sing,  
Happy in beauty, life, and love, and everything,  
A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,  
While, like held breath, the stars drew in their panting fires.  
And then she whisper’d in such trembling tone,  
As those who, safe together met alone  
For the first time through many anguish’d days,  
Use other speech than looks; bidding him raise  
His drooping head, and clear his soul of doubt,  
For that she was a woman, and without  
Any more subtle fluid in her veins  
Than throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains  
Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.  
And next she wonder’d how his eyes could miss  
Her face so long in Corinth, where, she said,  
She dwelt but half retired, and there had led  
Days happy as the gold coin could invent

Without the aid of love ; yet in content  
Till she saw him, as once she pass'd him by,  
Where 'gainst a column he leant thoughtfully  
At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets heap'd  
Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reap'd  
Late on that eve, as 'twas the night before  
The Adonian feast ; whereof she saw no more,  
But wept alone those days, for why should she adore ?  
Lycius from death awoke into amaze,  
To see her still, and singing so sweet lays ;  
Then from amaze into delight he fell  
To hear her whisper woman's lore so well ;  
And every word she spake enticed him on  
To unperplex'd delight and pleasure known.  
Let the mad poets say whate'er they please  
Of the sweets of Fairies, Peris, Goddesses,  
There is not such a tréat among them all,  
Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,  
As a real woman, lineal indeed  
From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's seed.  
Thus gentle Lamia judged, and judged aright,  
That Lycius could not love in half a fright,  
So threw the goddess off, and won his heart  
More pleasantly by playing woman's part,  
With no more awe than what her beauty gave,  
That, while it smote, still guaranteed to save.  
Lycius to all made eloquent reply,  
Marrying to every word a twin-born sigh ;  
And last, pointing to Corinth, ask'd her sweet,  
If 'twas too far that night for her soft feet.  
The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness  
Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease

To a few paces ; not at all surmised  
 By blinded Lycius, so in her comprised  
 They pass'd the city gates, he knew not how,  
 So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all,  
 Throughout her palaces imperial,  
 And all her populous streets and temples lewd,  
 Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance brew'd,  
 To the wide-spreaded night above her towers.  
 Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool hours,  
 Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white,  
 Companion'd or alone ; while many a light  
 Flared, here and there, from wealthy festivals,  
 And threw their moving shadows on the walls,  
 Or found them cluster'd in the corniced shade  
 Of some arch'd temple door, or dusky colonnade.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in fear,  
 Her fingers he press'd hard, as one came near  
 With curl'd grey beard, sharp eyes, and smooth bald crown,  
 Slow-stepp'd, and robed in philosophic gown :  
 Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,  
 Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,  
 While hurried Lamia trembled : " Ah," said he,  
 " Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully ?  
 Why does your tender palm dissolve in dew ?"—  
 " I'm wearied," said fair Lamia : " tell me who  
 Is that old man ? I cannot bring to mind  
 His features :—Lycius ! wherefore did you blind  
 Yourself from his quick eyes ?" Lycius replied,  
 "'Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide



And good instructor ; but to-night he seems  
The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams.”

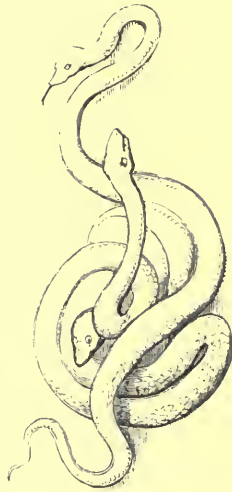
While yet he spake they had arrived before  
A pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door,

Where hung a silver lamp whose phosphor glow  
Reflected in the slabbed steps below,  
Mild as a star in water ; for so new  
And so unsullied was the marble hue,  
So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,  
Ran the dark veins, that none but feet divine  
Could e'er have touch'd there. Sounds Æolian  
Breathed from the hinges, as the ample span  
Of the wide doors disclosed a place unknown  
Some time to any, but those two alone,  
And a few Persian mutes, who that same year  
Were seen about the markets : none knew where  
They could inhabit ; the most curious  
Were foil'd, who watch'd to trace them to their house :  
And but the flitter-winged verse must tell,  
For truth's sake what woe afterwards befel,  
'Twould humour many a heart to leave them thus,  
Shut from the busy world of more incredulous.





PART II.





## PART II.

—♦—

LOVE in a hut, with water and a crust,  
Is—Love, forgive us!—cinders, ashes, dust :  
Love in a palace is perhaps at last  
More grievous torment than a hermit's fast :—  
That is a doubtful tale from faery land,  
Hard for the non-elect to understand.  
Had Lycius lived to hand his story down,  
He might have given the moral a fresh frown,  
Or clench'd it quite : but too short was their bliss  
To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss.  
Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,  
Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,  
Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful roar,  
Above the lintel of their chamber door,  
And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor.

For all this came a ruin : side by side  
They were enthroned, in the even tide.  
Upon a couch, near to a curtaining  
Whose airy texture, from a golden string.

Floated into the room, and let appear  
Unveil'd the summer heaven, blue and clear,  
Betwixt two marble shafts :—there they reposed,  
Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,  
Saving a tithe which love still open kept,  
That they might see each other while they almost slept ;  
When from the slope side of a suburb hill,  
Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a thrill  
Of trumpets—Lycius started—the sounds fled,  
But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.  
For the first time, since first he harbour'd in  
That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,  
His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn  
Into the noisy world almost forsworn.  
The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,  
Saw this with pain, so arguing a want  
Of something more, more than her empery  
Of joys ; and she began to moan and sigh  
Because he mused beyond her, knowing well  
That but a moment's thought is passion's passing bell.  
“ Why do you sigh, fair creature ? ” whisper'd he :  
“ Why, do you think ? ” return'd she tenderly :  
“ You have deserted me ; where am I now ?  
Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow :  
No, no, you have dismiss'd me ; and I go  
From your breast houseless : ay, it must be so.”  
He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,  
Where he was mirror'd small in paradise,—  
“ My silver planet, both of eve and morn !  
Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,  
While I am striving how to fill my heart  
With deeper crimson, and a double smart ?

How to entangle, trammel up and snare  
Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there,  
Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose ?  
Ay, a sweet kiss—you see your mighty woes.  
My thoughts! shall I unveil them? Listen then!  
What mortal hath a prize, that other men  
May be confounded and abash'd withal,  
But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestic,  
And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice  
Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.  
Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,  
While through the thronged streets your bridal car  
Wheels round its dazzling spokes."—The lady's cheek  
Trembled; she nothing said, but, pale and meek,  
Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain  
Of sorrows at his words; at last with pain  
Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,  
To change his purpose. He thereat was stung,  
Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim  
Her wild and timid nature to his aim;  
Besides, for all his love, in self despite,  
Against his better self, he took delight  
Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.  
His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue  
Fierce and sanguineous as 'twas possible  
In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.  
Fine was the mitigated fury, like  
Apollo's presence when in act to strike  
The serpent—Ha, the serpent! certes, she  
Was none. She burnt, she loved the tyranny,  
And, all subdued, consented to the hour  
When to the bridal he should lead his paramour.

Whispering in midnight silence, said the youth,  
 "Sure some sweet name thou hast, though, by my truth,  
 I have not ask'd it, ever thinking thee  
 Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,  
 As still I do. Hast any mortal name,  
 Fit appellation for this dazzling frame?  
 Or friends or kinsfolk on the citted earth,  
 To share our marriage feast and nuptial mirth?"  
 "I have no friends," said Lamia, "no, not one;  
 My presence in wide Corinth hardly known:  
 My parents' bones are in their dusty urns  
 Sepulchred, where no kindled incense burns,  
 Seeing all their luckless race are dead, save me,  
 And I neglect the holy rite for thee.  
 Even as you list invite your many guests;  
 But if, as now it seems, your vision rests  
 With any pleasure on me, do not bid  
 Old Apollonius—from him keep me hid."  
 Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and blank,  
 Made close inquiry; from whose touch she shrank,  
 Feigning a sleep; and he to the dull shade  
 Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd.

It was the custom then to bring away  
 The bride from home at blushing shut of day,  
 Veil'd, in a chariot, heralded along  
 By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage song,  
 With other pageants: but this fair unknown  
 Had not a friend. So being left alone  
 (Lycius was gone to summon all his kin),  
 And knowing surely she could never win  
 His foolish heart from its mad pompousness,

She set herself, high-thoughted, how to dress  
The misery in fit magnificence.  
She did so, but 'tis doubtful how and whence  
Came, and who were her subtle servitors.  
About the halls, and to and from the doors,  
There was a noise of wings, till in short space  
The glowing banquet-room shone with wide-arched grace.  
A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone  
Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan  
Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.  
Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade  
Of palm and plantain, met from either side,  
High in the midst, in honour of the bride :  
Two palms and then two plantains, and so on,  
From either side their stems branch'd one to one  
All down the aisled place ; and beneath all  
There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall to  
wall.

So canopied, lay an untasted feast  
Teeming with odours. Lamia, regal drest,  
Silently paced about, and as she went,  
In pale contented sort of discontent,  
Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich  
The fretted splendour of each nook and niche.  
Between the tree-stems marbled plain at first,  
Came jasper panels ; then, anon, there burst  
Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees,  
And with the larger wove in small intricacies.  
Approving all, she faded at self-will,  
And shut the chamber up, close, hush'd and still,  
Complete and ready for the revels rude,  
When dreadful guests would come to spoil her solitude.

The day appear'd, and all the gossip rout.  
 O senseless Lycius! Madman! wherefore flout  
 The silent-blessing fate, warm cloister'd hours,  
 And show to common eyes these secret bowers?  
 The herd approach'd; each guest, with busy brain,  
 Arriving at the portal, gazed amain,  
 And enter'd marvelling: for they knew the street,  
 Remember'd it from childhood all complete  
 Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen  
 That royal porch, that high-built fair demesne;  
 So in they hurried all, mazed, curious and keen:  
 Save one, who look'd thereon with eye severe,  
 And with calm-planted steps walk'd in austere;  
 'Twas Apollonius: something too he laugh'd,  
 As though some knotty problem, that had daft  
 His patient thought, had now begun to thaw,  
 And solve and melt:—'twas just as he foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vestibule  
 His young disciple. "'Tis no common rule,  
 Lycius," said he, "for uninvited guest  
 To force himself upon you, and infest  
 With an unbidden presence the bright throng  
 Of younger friends; yet must I do this wrong,  
 And you forgive me." Lycius blush'd and led  
 The old man through the inner doors broad-spread;  
 With reconciling words and courteous mien  
 Turning into sweet milk the sophist's spleen.

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-room,  
 Fill'd with pervading brilliance and perfume:  
 Before each lucid panel fuming stood

A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,  
Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,  
Whose slender feet wide-swerved upon the soft  
Wool-woofed carpets : fifty wreaths of smoke  
From fifty censers their light voyage took  
To the high roof, still mimick'd as they rose  
Along the mirror'd walls by twin-clouds odorous.  
Twelve sphered tables by silk seats insphered,  
High as the level of a man's breast rear'd  
On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy gold  
Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice told  
Of Ceres' horn, and, in huge vessels, wine  
Came from the gloomy tun with merry shine.  
Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,  
Each shrining in the midst the image of a God.

When in an antechamber every guest  
Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure press'd,  
By ministering slaves, upon his hands and feet,  
And fragrant oils with ceremony meet  
Pour'd on his hair, they all moved to the feast  
In white robes, and themselves in order placed  
Around the silken couches, wondering  
Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of wealth could  
spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,  
While fluent Greek a vowel'd under-song  
Kept up among the guests, discoursing low  
At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow ;  
But when the happy vintage touch'd their brains,  
Louder they talk, and louder come the strains

Of powerful instruments :—the gorgeous dyes,  
 The space, the splendour of the draperies,  
 The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,  
 Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,  
 Now, when the wine has done its rosy deed,  
 And every soul from human trammels freed,  
 No more so strange ; for merry wine, sweet wine,  
 Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too divine.  
 Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height ;  
 Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright eyes double bright :  
 Garlands of every green, and every scent  
 From vales deflower'd, or forest-trees branch-rent,  
 In baskets of bright osier'd gold were brought  
 High as the handles heap'd, to suit the thought  
 Of every guest ; that each, as he did please,  
 Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at his ease.

What wreath for Lamia ? What for Lycius ?  
 What for the sage, old Apollonius ?  
 Upon her aching forehead be there hung  
 The leaves of willow and of adder's tongue ;  
 And for the youth, quick, let us strip for him  
 The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may swim  
 Into forgetfulness ; and, for the sage,  
 Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle wage  
 War on his temples. Do not all charms fly  
 At the mere touch of cold philosophy ?  
 There was an awful rainbow once in heaven :  
 We know her woof, her texture ; she is given  
 In the dull catalogue of common things.  
 Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,  
 Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,



Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—  
 Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made  
 The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,  
 Scarce saw in all the room another face,  
 Till, checking his love trance, a cup he took  
 Full brimm'd, and opposite sent forth a look  
 'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance  
 From his old teacher's wrinkled countenance,  
 And pledge him. The bald-head philosopher  
 Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or a stir,  
 Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride,  
 Brow-beating her fair form, and troubling her sweet pride.  
 Lycius then press'd her hand, with devout touch,  
 As pale it lay upon the rosy couch :  
 'Twas icy, and the cold ran through his veins ;  
 Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains  
 Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.  
 " Lamia, what means this ? Wherefore dost thou start ?  
 Know'st thou that man ? " Poor Lamia answer'd not.  
 He gazed into her eyes, and not a jot  
 Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal :  
 More, more he gazed : his human senses reel :  
 Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs ;  
 There was no recognition in those orbs.  
 " Lamia ! " he cried—and no soft-toned reply.  
 The many heard, and the loud revelry  
 Grew hush ; the stately music no more breathes ;  
 The myrtle sicken'd in a thousand wreaths.  
 By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased ;  
 A deadly silence step by step increased,

Until it seem'd a horrid presence there,  
 And not a man but felt the terror in his hair.  
 "Lamia!" he shriek'd; and nothing but the shriek  
 With its sad echo did the silence break.

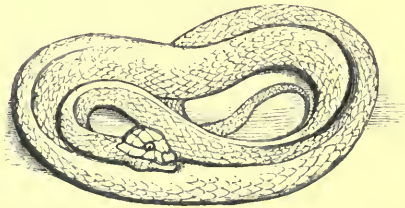


"Begone, foul dream!" he cried, gazing again  
 In the bride's face, where now no azure vein  
 Wander'd on fair-spaced temples; no soft bloom  
 Misted the cheek; no passion to illumine  
 The deep-recessed vision:—all was blight;  
 Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly white.

“Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruthless man!  
Turn them aside, wretch! or the righteous ban  
Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images  
Here represent their shadowy presences,  
May pierce them on the sudden with the thorn  
Of painful blindness; leaving thee forlorn,  
In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright  
Of conscience, for their long-offended might,  
For all thine impious proud-heart sophistries,  
Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.  
Corinthians! look upon that grey-beard wretch!  
Mark how, possess'd, his lashless eyelids stretch  
Around his demon eyes! Corinthians, see!  
My sweet bride withers at their potency.”  
“Fool!” said the sophist, in an under-tone  
Gruff with contempt; which a death-nighing moan  
From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and lost,  
He sank supine beside the aching ghost.  
“Fool! Fool!” repeated he, while his eyes still  
Relented not, nor moved; “from every ill  
Of life have I preserved thee to this day,  
And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey?”  
Then Lamia breathed death-breath; the sophist's eye,  
Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly,  
Keen, cruel, perceant, stinging: she, as well  
As her weak hand could any meaning tell,  
Motion'd him to be silent; vainly so,  
He look'd and look'd again a level—No!  
“A serpent!” echoed he; no sooner said,  
Than with a frightful scream she vanished:  
And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,  
As were his limbs of life, from that same night.

On the high couch he lay!—his friends came round—  
Supported him—no pulse or breath they found,  
And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body wound.\*

\* "Philostratus, in his fourth book, *de Vita Apollonii*, hath a memorable instance in this kind, which I may not omit, of one Menippus Lycius, a young man twenty-five years of age, that, going betwixt Cenehreas and Coriuth, met such a phantasm in the habit of a fair gentlewoman, which, taking him by the hand, carried him home to her house, in the suburbs of Coriuth, and told him she was a Phœnician by birth, and if he would tarry with her, he should hear her sing and play, and drink such wine as never any drank, and no man should molest him; but she, being fair and lovely, would die with him, that was fair and lovely to behold. The young man, a philosopher, otherwise staid and discreet, able to moderate his passions, though not this of love, tarried with her awhile to his great content, and at last married her, to whose wedding, amongst other guests, came Apollonius; who, by some probable conjectures, found her out to be a serpent, a lamia; and that all her furniture was, like Tantalus' gold, described by Homer, no substance, but mere illusions. When she saw herself deserted, she wept, and desired Apollonius to be silent, but he would not be moved, and thereupon she, plate, house, and all that was in it, vanished in an instant; many thousands took notice of this fact, for it was done in the midst of Greece"—BURTON'S *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Part 3, Sect. 2, Memb. I. Subs. I.





OR THE POT OF BASIL;

A STORY, FROM BOCCACCIO.



## ISABELLA, OR THE POT OF BASIL ;

A STORY, FROM BOCCACCIO.

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### I.

FAIR Isabel, poor simple Isabel !

Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye !  
They could not in the self-same mansion dwell  
Without some stir of heart, some malady :  
They could not sit at meals but feel how well  
It soothed each to be the other by ;  
They could not, sure, beneath the same roof sleep,  
But to each other dream, and nightly weep.

### II.

With every morn their love grew tenderer,  
With every eve deeper and tenderer still :  
He might not in house, field, or garden stir,  
But her full shape would all his seeing fill ;  
And his continual voice was pleasanter  
To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill ;  
Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,  
She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same.

## III.

He knew whose gentle hand was at the latch,  
 Before the door had given her to his eyes ;  
 And from her chamber-window he would catch  
 Her beauty farther than the falcon spies ;  
 And constant as her vespers would he watch,  
 Because her face was turn'd to the same skies ;  
 And with sick longing all the night outwear,  
 To hear her morning-step upon the stair.

## IV.

A whole long month of May in this sad plight  
 Made their cheeks paler by the break of June :  
 " To-morrow will I bow to my delight,  
 To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon."—  
 " O may I never see another night,  
 Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's tune."—  
 So spake they to their pillows ; but, alas,  
 Honeyless days and days did he let pass ;

## V.

Until sweet Isabella's untouch'd cheek  
 Fell sick within the rose's just domain,  
 Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth seek  
 By every lull to cool her infant's pain :  
 " How ill she is !" said he, " I may not speak,  
 And yet I will, and tell my love all plain :  
 If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her tears,  
 And at the least 'twill startle off her cares."





## VI.

So said he one fair morning, and all day  
His heart beat awfully against his side ;  
And to his heart he inwardly did pray  
For power to speak ; but still the ruddy tide  
Stifled his voice, and pulsed resolve away —  
Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride,  
Yet brought him to the meekness of a child :  
Alas ! when passion is both meek and wild !

## VII.

So once more he had waked and anguished  
 A dreary night of love and misery,  
 If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed  
 To every symbol on his forehead high ;  
 She saw it waxing very pale and dead,  
 And straight all flush'd ; so, lisped tenderly,  
 " Lorenzo ! "—here she ceased her timid quest,  
 But in her tone and look he read the rest.

## VIII.

" O Isabella ! I can half perceive  
 That I may speak my grief into thine ear ;  
 If thou didst ever anything believe,  
 Believe how I love thee, believe how near  
 My soul is to its doom : I would not grieve  
 Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear  
 Thine eyes by gazing ; but I cannot live  
 Another night, and not my passion shrive.

## IX.

" Love ! thou art leading me from wintry cold,  
 Lady ! thou ledest me to summer clime,  
 And I must taste the blossoms that unfold  
 In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time."  
 So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,  
 And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme :  
 Great bliss was with them, and great happiness  
 Grew, like a lusty flower in June's caress.

## x.

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,  
 Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart  
 Only to meet again more close, and share  
 The inward fragrance of each other's heart.  
 She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair  
 Sang, of delicious love and honey'd dart ;  
 He with light steps went up a western hill,  
 And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his fill.

## xi.

All close they met again, before the dusk  
 Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,  
 All close they met, all eves, before the dusk  
 Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,  
 Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk,  
 Unknown of any, free from whispering tale.  
 Ah ! better had it been for ever so,  
 Than idle ears should pleasure in their woe.

## xii.

Were they unhappy then ?—It cannot be—  
 Too many tears for lovers have been shed,  
 Too many sighs give we to them in fee,  
 Too much of pity after they are dead,  
 Too many doleful stories do we see,  
 Whose matter in bright gold were best be read ;  
 Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse  
 Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

## XIII.

But, for the general award of love,  
 The little sweet doth kill much bitterness ;  
 Though Dido silent is in under-grove,  
 And Isabella's was a great distress,  
 Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove  
 Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the less—  
 Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,  
 Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

## XIV.

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,  
 Enriched from ancestral merchandise,  
 And for them many a weary hand did swelt  
 In torched mines and noisy factories,  
 And many once proud-quiver'd loins did melt  
 In blood from stinging whip ; with hollow eyes  
 Many all day in dazzling river stood,  
 To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

## XV.

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,  
 And went all naked to the hungry shark ;  
 For them his ears gush'd blood ; for them in death  
 The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark  
 Lay full of darts ; for them alone did seethe  
 A thousand men in troubles wide and dark :  
 Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,  
 That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.

## xvi.

Why were they proud ? Because their marble founts  
 Gush'd with more pride than do a wretch's tears ?  
 Why were they proud ? Because fair orange-mounts  
 Were of more soft ascent than lazar stairs ?  
 Why were they proud ? Because red-lined accounts  
 Were richer than the songs of Grecian years ?  
 Why were they proud ? again we ask aloud,  
 Why in the name of Glory were they proud ?

## xvii.

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired  
 In hungry pride and gainful cowardice,  
 As two close Hebrews in that land inspired,  
 Paled in and vineyarded from beggar-spies ;  
 The hawks of ship-mast forests—the untired  
 And pannier'd mules for ducats and old lies—  
 Quick cat's-paws on the generous stray-away,—  
 Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

## xviii.

How was it these same ledger-men could spy  
 Fair Isabella in her downy nest ?  
 How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye  
 A straying from his toil ? Hot Egypt's pest  
 Into their vision covetous and sly !  
 How could these money-bags see east and west ?  
 Yet so they did—and every dealer fair  
 Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

## XIX.

O eloquent and famed Boccaccio !  
 Of thee we now should ask forgiving boon,  
 And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,  
 And of thy roses amorous of the moon,  
 And of thy lilies, that do paler grow  
 Now they can no more hear thy ghittern's tune,  
 For venturing syllables that ill besem  
 The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

## XX.

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale  
 Shall move on soberly, as it is meet ;  
 There is no other crime, no mad assail  
 To make old prose in modern rhyme more sweet :  
 But it is done—succeed the verse or fail—  
 To honour thee, and thy gone spirit greet ;  
 To stead thee as a verse in English tongue,  
 An echo of thee in the north-wind sung.

## XXI.

These brethren having found by many signs  
 What love Lorenzo for their sister had,  
 And how she loved him too, each unconfines  
 His bitter thoughts to other, well nigh mad  
 That he, the servant of their trade designs,  
 Should in their sister's love be blithe and glad,  
 When 'twas their plan to coax her by degrees  
 To some high noble and his olive-trees.

## XXII.

And many a jealous conference had they,  
And many times they bit their lips alone,  
Before they fix'd upon a surest way  
To make the youngster for his crime atone ;  
And at the last, these men of cruel clay  
Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the bone ;  
For they resolved in some forest dim  
To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

## XXIII.

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant  
Into the sun-rise, o'er the balustrade  
Of the garden-terrace, towards him they bent  
Their footing through the dews ; and to him said,  
" You seem there in the quiet of content,  
Lorenzo, and we are most loth to invade  
Calm speculation ; but if you are wise,  
Bestride your steed while cold is in the skies.

## XXIV.

" To-day we purpose, ay, this hour we mount  
To spur three leagues towards the Apennine ;  
Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot sun count  
His dewy rosary on the eglantine."'  
Lorenzo, courteously as he was wont,  
Bow'd a fair greeting to these serpents' whine ;  
And went in haste, to get in readiness,  
With belt, and spur, and bracing huntsman's dress.

## XXV.

And as he to the court-yard pass'd along,  
 Each third step did he pause, and listen'd oft  
 If he could hear his lady's matin-song,  
 Or the light whisper of her footstep soft;  
 And as he thus over his passion hung,  
 He heard a laugh full musical aloft;  
 When, looking up, he saw her features bright  
 Smile through an in-door lattice all delight.

## XXVI.

"Love, Isabel!" said he, "I was in pain  
 Lest I should miss to bid thee a good morrow:  
 Ah! what if I should lose thee, when so fain  
 I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow  
 Of a poor three hours' absence? but we'll gain  
 Out of the amorous dark what day doth borrow.  
 Good bye! I'll soon be back."—"Good bye!" said she:  
 And as he went she chanted merrily.

## XXVII.

So the two brothers and their murder'd man  
 Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno's stream  
 Gurgles through straighten'd banks, and still doth fan  
 Itself with dancing bulrush, and the bream  
 Keeps head against the freshets. Sick and wan  
 The brothers' faces in the ford did seem,  
 Lorenzo's flush with love. They pass'd the water  
 Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.



## XXVIII.

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,  
 There in that forest did his great love cease ;  
 Ah ! when a soul doth thus its freedom win,  
 It aches in loneliness—is ill at peace  
 As the break-covert blood-hounds of such sin :  
 They dipp'd their swords in the water, and did tease  
 Their horses homeward, with convulsed spur,  
 Each richer by his being a murderer. -

## XXIX.

They told their sister how, with sudden speed,  
 Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,  
 Because of some great urgency and need  
 In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.  
 Poor girl ! put on thy stifling widow's weed,  
 And 'scape at once from Hope's accursed bands ;  
 To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-morrow,  
 And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

## XXX.

She weeps alone for pleasures not to be ;  
 Sorely she wept until the night came on,  
 And then, instead of love, O misery !  
 She brooded o'er the luxury alone :  
 His image in the dusk she seem'd to see,  
 And to the silence made a gentle moan,  
 Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,  
 And on her couch low murmuring, " Where ? O where ? "

## XXXI.

But Selfishness, Love's cousin, held not long  
 Its fiery vigil in her single breast ;  
 She fretted for the golden hour, and hung  
 Upon the time with feverish unrest—  
 Not long ; for soon into her heart a throng  
 Of higher occupants, a richer zest,  
 Came tragic ; passion not to be subdued,  
 And sorrow for her love in travels rude.

## XXXII.

In the mid days of autumn, on their eyes  
 The breath of Winter comes from far away,  
 And the sick west continually bereaves  
 Of some gold tinge, and plays a roundelay  
 Of death among the bushes and the leaves,  
 To make all bare before he dares to stray  
 From his north cavern. So sweet Isabel  
 By gradual decay from beauty fell,

## XXXIII.

Because Lorenzo came not. Oftentimes  
 She ask'd her brothers, with an eye all pale,  
 Striving to be itself, what dungeon climes  
 Could keep him off so long ? They spake a tale  
 Time after time, to quiet her. Their crimes  
 Came on them, like a smoke from Hinnom's vale ;  
 And every night in dreams they groan'd aloud,  
 To see their sister in her snowy shroud.

## XXXIV.

And she had died in drowsy ignorance,  
But for a thing more deadly dark than all;  
It came like a fierce potion, drunk by chance,  
Which saves a sick man from the feather'd pall  
For some few gasping moments; like a lance,  
Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall  
With cruel pierce, and bringing him again  
Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and brain.

## XXXV.

It was a vision. In the drowsy gloom,  
The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot  
Lorenzo stood, and wept: the forest tomb  
Had marr'd his glossy hair which once could shoot  
Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom  
Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute  
From his lorn voice, and past his loamed ears  
Had made a miry channel for his tears.

## XXXVI.

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spake;  
For there was striving, in its piteous tongue,  
To speak as when on earth it was awake,  
And Isabella on its music hung:  
Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake,  
As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung;  
And through it moan'd a ghostly under-song.  
Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briars among.

## XXXVII.

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright  
 With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof  
 From the poor girl by magic of their light,  
 The while it did unthread the horrid woof  
 Of the late darken'd time—the murderous spite  
 Of pride and avarice—the dark pine roof  
 In the forest—and the sodden turfed dell,  
 Where, without any word, from stabs he fell.



## XXXVIII.

Saying moreover, " Isabel, my sweet !  
 Red whortle-berries droop above my head,  
 And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet ;  
 Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed  
 Their leaves and prickly nuts ; a sheep-fold bleat  
 Comes from beyond the river to my bed :  
 Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,  
 And it shall comfort me within the tomb.



XXXIX.

“ I am a shadow now, alas ! alas !

Upon the skirts of human nature dwelling  
Alone : I chant alone the holy mass,

While little sounds of life are round me knelling,  
And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,

And many a chapel bell the hour is telling,  
Paining me through : those sounds grow strange to me,  
And thou art distaut in Humanity.

XL.

“ I know what was, I feel full well what is.

And I should rage, if spirits could go mad ;  
Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss,

That paleness warms my grave, as though I had  
A seraph chosen from the bright abyss

To be my spouse : thy paleness makes me glad :  
Thy beauty grows upon me. and I feel  
A greater love through all my essence steal.”

## XLI.

The Spirit mourn'd "Adieu!"—dissolved, and left  
 The atom darkness in a slow turmoil;  
 As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft,  
 Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless toil,  
 We put our eyes into a pillowy cleft,  
 And see the spangly gloom froth up and boil:  
 It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,  
 And in the dawn she started up awake;

## XLII.

"Ha! ha!" said she, "I knew not this hard life,  
 I thought the worst was simple misery;  
 I thought some Fate with pleasure or with strife  
 Portion'd us—happy days, or else to die;  
 But there is crime—a brother's bloody knife!  
 Sweet Spirit, thou hast school'd my infancy:  
 I'll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes,  
 And greet thee morn and even in the skies."

## XLIII.

When the full morning came, she had devised  
 How she might secret to the forest hie;  
 How she might find the clay, so dearly prized,  
 And sing to it one latest lullaby;  
 How her short absence might be unsurmised,  
 While she the inmost of the dream would try.  
 Resolved, she took with her an aged nurse,  
 And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

## XLIV.

See, as they creep along the river side,  
How she doth whisper to that aged dame,  
And, after looking round the champaign wide,  
Shows her a knife.—“What feverous hectic flame  
Burns in thee, child?—what good can thee betide  
That thou shouldst smile again?”—The evening came,  
And they had found Lorenzo’s earthy bed;  
The flint was there, the berries at his head.

## XLV.

Who hath not loiter’d in a green church-yard,  
And let his spirit, like a demon mole,  
Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard,  
To see skull, coffin’d bones, and funeral stole;  
Pitying each form that hungry Death hath marr’d,  
And filling it once more with human soul?  
Ah! this is holiday to what was felt  
When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt.

## XLVI.

She gazed into the fresh-thrown mould, as though  
One glance did fully all its secrets tell;  
Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know  
Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well;  
Upon the murderous spot she seem’d to grow,  
Like to a native lily of the dell:  
Then with her knife, all sudden she began  
To dig more fervently than misers can.

## XLVII.

Soon she turn'd up a soiled glove, whereon  
Her silk had play'd in purple phantasies ;  
She kiss'd it with a lip more chill than stone,  
And put it in her bosom, where it dries  
And freezes utterly unto the bone  
Those dainties made to still an infant's cries :  
Then 'gan she work again ; nor stay'd her care,  
But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

## XLVIII.

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,  
Until her heart felt pity to the core  
At sight of such a dismal labouring,  
And so she kneeled, with her locks all hoar,  
And put her lean hands to the horrid thing :  
Three hours they labour'd at this travail sore ;  
At last they felt the kernel of the grave,  
And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

## XLIX.

Ah ! wherefore all this wormy circumstance ?  
Why linger at the yawning tomb so long ?  
O for the gentleness of old Romance,  
The simple plaining of a minstrel's song !  
Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,  
For here, in truth, it doth not well belong  
To speak :—O turn thee to the very tale,  
And taste the music of that vision pale.





L.

With duller steel than the Perséan sword  
 They cut away no formless monster's head,  
 But one, whose gentleness did well accord  
 With death, as life. The ancient harps have said,  
 Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord :  
 If Love impersonate was ever dead,  
 Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.  
 'Twas love ; cold,—dead indeed, but not dethroned.

LI.

In anxious secrecy they took it home,  
 And then the prize was all for Isabel :  
 She calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb,  
 And all around each eye's sepulchral cell  
 Pointed each fringed lash ; the smeared loam  
 With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,  
 She drench'd away : and still she comb'd and kept  
 Sighing all day—and still she kiss'd and wept.

## LII.

Then in a silken scarf,—sweet with the dews  
 Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby,  
 And divine liquids come with odorous ooze  
 Through the cold serpent-pipe refreshfully,—  
 She wrapp'd it up ; and for its tomb did choose  
 A garden-pot, wherein she laid it by,  
 And cover'd it with mould, and o'er it set  
 Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

## LIII.

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,  
 And she forgot the blue above the trees,  
 And she forgot the dells where waters run,  
 And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze ;  
 She had no knowledge when the day was done,  
 And the new morn she saw not : but in peace  
 Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,  
 And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.

## LIV.

And so she ever fed it with thin tears,  
 Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew,  
 So that it smelt more balmy than its peers  
 Of Basil-tufts in Florence ; for it drew  
 Nurture besides, and life, from human fears,  
 From the fast mouldering head there shut from view :  
 So that the jewel, safely casketed,  
 Came forth, and in perfumed leaflets spread.

## LV.

O Melancholy, linger here awhile !  
 O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !  
 O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle,  
 Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh !  
 Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and smile ;  
 Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,  
 And make a pale light in your cypress glooms,  
 Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs.

## LVI.

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,  
 From the deep throat of sad Melpomene !  
 Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go.  
 And touch the strings into a mystery ;  
 Sound mournfully upon the winds and low :  
 For simple Isabel is soon to be  
 Among the dead : She withers, like a palm  
 Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm.

## LVII.

O leave the palm to wither by itself :  
 Let not quick Winter chill its dying hour !—  
 It may not be—those Baâlites of pelf,  
 Her brethren, noted the continual shower  
 From her dead eyes ; and many a curious elf,  
 Among her kindred, wonder'd that such dower  
 Of youth and beauty should be thrown aside  
 By one mark'd out to be a Noble's bride.

## LVIII.

And, furthermore, her brethren wonder'd much  
 Why she sat drooping by the Basil green,  
 And why it flourish'd, as by magic touch ;  
 Greatly they wonder'd what the thing might mean :  
 They could not surely give belief, that such  
 A very nothing would have power to wean  
 Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures gay,  
 And even remembrance of her love's delay.

## LIX.

Therefore they watch'd a time when they might sift  
 This hidden whim ; and long they watch'd in vain ;  
 For seldom-did she go to chapel-shrift,  
 And seldom felt she any hunger-pain :  
 And when she left, she hurried back, as swift  
 As bird on wing to breast its eggs again :  
 And, patient as a hen-bird, sat her there  
 Beside her Basil, weeping through her hair.

## LX.

Yet they contrived to steal the Basil-pot,  
 And to examine it in secret place :  
 The thing was vile with green and livid spot,  
 And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face :  
 The guerdon of their murder they had got,  
 And so left Florence in a moment's space,  
 Never to turn again.—Away they went,  
 With blood upon their heads, to banishment.



## LXI.

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away !  
 O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !  
 O Echo, Echo, on some other day,  
 From isles Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh !  
 Spirits of grief, sing not your “ Well-a-way ! ”  
 For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die ;  
 Will die a death too lone and incomplete,  
 Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

## LXII.

Piteous she look'd on dead and senseless things,  
 Asking for her lost Basil amorously :  
 And with melodious chuckle in the strings  
 Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would cry  
 After the Pilgrim in his wanderings,  
 To ask him where her Basil was ; and why  
 'Twas hid from her : " For cruel 'tis," said she,  
 " To steal my Basil-pot away from me."

## LXIII.

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn,  
 Imploring for her Basil to the last.  
 No heart was there in Florence but did mourn  
 In pity of her love, so overcast.  
 And a sad ditty of this story borne  
 From mouth to mouth through all the country pass'd :  
 Still is the burthen sung—" O cruelty,  
 To steal my Basil-pot away from me !"





THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.





## THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.

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### I.

ST. AGNES' EVE—Ah, bitter chill it was!  
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;  
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,  
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:  
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers while he told  
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
Like pious incense from a censer old,  
Seem'd taking flight for heaven without a death,  
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

### II.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man:  
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,  
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,  
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:  
The sculptured dead, on each side seem to freeze,  
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:  
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,  
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails  
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

## III.

Northward he turneth through a little door,  
 And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue  
 Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor ;  
 But no—already had his death-bell rung ;  
 The joys of all his life were said and sung :  
 His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve :  
 Another way he went, and soon among  
 Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,  
 And all night kept awake, for sinner's sake to grieve.

## IV.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft ;  
 And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,  
 From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,  
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide :  
 The level chambers, ready with their pride,  
 Were glowing to receive a thousand guests :  
 The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,  
 Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,  
 With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their  
 breasts.

## V.

At length burst in the argent revelry,  
 With plume, tiara, and all rich array,  
 Numerous as shadows haunting faintly  
 The brain, new-stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay  
 Of old romance. These let us wish away,  
 And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,  
 Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,  
 On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,  
 As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

## VI.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,  
 Young virgins might have visions of delight,  
 And soft adorings from their loves receive  
 Upon the honey'd middle of the night,  
 If ceremonies due they did aright ;  
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,  
 And couch supine their beauties, lily white ;  
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require  
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

## VII.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline :  
 The music, yearning like a God in pain,  
 She scarcely heard : her maiden eyes divine,  
 Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train  
 Pass by—she heeded not at all : in vain  
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,  
 And back retired ; not cool'd by high disdain,  
 But she saw not : her heart was elsewhere ;  
 She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

## VIII.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,  
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short :  
 The hallow'd hour was near at hand : she sighs  
 Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort  
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport ;  
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,  
 Hoodwink'd with faery fancy ; all amorn,  
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,  
 And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

## IX.

So, purposing each moment to retire,  
 She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,  
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire  
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,  
 Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores  
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,  
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,  
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen ;  
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things  
     have been.

## X.

He ventures in : let no buzz'd whisper tell :  
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords  
 Will storm his heart, Love's feverous citadel :  
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,  
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,  
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl  
 Against his lineage : not one breast affords  
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,  
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

## XI.

Ah, happy chance ! the aged creature came,  
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,  
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,  
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond  
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland :  
 He startled her ; but soon she knew his face,  
 And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,  
 Saying, " Mercy, Porphyro ! hie thee from this place ;  
 They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race !

## XII.

“Get hence! get hence! there’s dwarfish Hildebrand;  
He had a fever late, and in the fit  
He cursed thee and thine, both house and land:  
Then there’s that old Lord Maurice, not a whit  
More tame for his grey hairs—Alas me! flit!  
Flit like a ghost away.”—“Ah, Gossip dear,  
We’re safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,  
And tell me how”—“Good Saints! not here, not here;  
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier.”



## XIII.

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,  
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume ;  
 And as she mutter'd " Well-a—well-a-day !"  
 He found him in a little moonlight room,  
 Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.  
 " Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,  
 " O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom  
 Which none but secret sisterhood may see,  
 When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

## XIV.

" St. Agnes ! Ah ! it is St. Agnes' Eve—  
 Yet men will murder upon holy days :  
 Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,  
 And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,  
 To venture so : it fills me with amaze  
 To see thee, Porphyro !—St. Agnes' Eve !  
 God's help ! my lady fair the conjuror plays  
 This very night : good angels her deceive !  
 But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

## XV.

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,  
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,  
 Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone  
 Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-book,  
 As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.  
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told  
 His lady's purpose ; and he scarce could brook  
 Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,  
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

## XVI.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,  
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart  
 Made purple riot : then doth he propose  
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame start :  
 " A cruel man and impious thou art :  
 Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep and dream  
 Alone with her good angels, far apart  
 From wicked men like thee. Go, Go! I deem  
 Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

## XVII.

" I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"  
 Quoth Porphyro : " O may I ne'er find grace  
 When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,  
 If one of her soft ringlets I displace,  
 Or look with ruffian passion in her face :  
 Good Angela, believe me by these tears ;  
 Or I will, even in a moment's space,  
 Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,  
 And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves and  
 bears."

## XVIII.

" Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?  
 A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,  
 Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll ;  
 Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,  
 Were never miss'd." Thus plaining, doth she bring  
 A gentler speech from burning Porphyro ;  
 So woeful, and of such deep sorrowing,  
 That Angela gives promise she will do  
 Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

## XIX.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,  
 Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide  
 Him in a closet, of such privacy  
 That he might see her beauty unespied,  
 And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,  
 While legion'd fairies paced the coverlet,  
 And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.  
 Never on such a night have lovers met,  
 Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

## XX.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame :  
 "All eates and dainties shall be stored there  
 Quickly on this feast-night : by the tambour frame  
 Her own lute thou wilt see : no time to spare,  
 For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare  
 On such a catering trust my dizzy head.  
 Wait here, my child, with patience kneel in prayer  
 The while : Ah ! thou must needs the lady wed,  
 Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

## XXI.

So saying she hobbled off with busy fear.  
 The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd ;  
 The Dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear  
 To follow her ; with aged eyes aghast  
 From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,  
 Through many a dusky gallery, they gain  
 The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste ;  
 Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.  
 His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.



## XXII.

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade,  
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,  
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,  
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware :  
With silver taper's light, and pious care,  
She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led  
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,  
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed ;  
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

## XXIII.

Out went the taper as she hurried in ;  
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died :  
She closed the door, she panted, all akin  
To spirits of the air, and visions wide :  
No utter'd syllable, or, woe betide !  
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,  
Paining with eloquence her balmy side ;  
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell  
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

## XXIV.

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,  
All garlanded with carven imageries  
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,  
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,  
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,  
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings ;  
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,  
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,  
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

## XXV.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,  
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,  
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon ;  
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,  
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,  
And on her hair a glory, like a saint :  
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,  
Save wings, for heaven : Porphyro grew faint :  
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

## XXVI.

Anon his heart revives : her vespers done,  
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees ;  
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one ;  
Loosens her fragrant bodice ; by degrees  
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees :  
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,  
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,  
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,  
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

## XXVII.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,  
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,  
Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd  
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away ;  
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day ;  
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain ;  
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray ;  
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,  
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

## XXVIII.

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,  
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,  
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced  
To wake into a slumberous tenderness ;  
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,  
And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,  
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness  
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,  
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!—how fast she  
slept.



## XXIX.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon  
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set  
 A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon  
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet :—  
 O for some drowsy Morphean amulet !  
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,  
 The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,  
 Affray his ears, though but in dying tone :—  
 The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

## XXX.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,  
 In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,  
 While he from forth the closet brought a heap  
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd ;  
 With jellies soother than the creamy curd,  
 And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon ;  
 Manna and dates, in agosy transferr'd  
 From Fez ; and spiced dainties, every one,  
 From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

## XXXI.

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing hand  
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright  
 Of wreathed silver : sumptuous they stand  
 In the retired quiet of the night,  
 Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—  
 “ And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake !  
 Thou art my heaven, and I thine hermit :  
 Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,  
 Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.”

## XXXII.

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm  
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream  
 By the dusk curtains :—'twas a midnight charm  
 Impossible to melt as iced stream :  
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight glean ;  
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies :  
 It seem'd he never, never could redeem  
 From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes ;  
 So mused awhile. entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

## XXXIII.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—  
 Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,  
 He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,  
 In Provence call'd " La belle dame sans mercy : "  
 Close to her ear touching the melody :—  
 Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan :  
 He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly  
 Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone :  
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

## XXXIV.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,  
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep :  
 There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd  
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep.  
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,  
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh ;  
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep ;  
 Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,  
 Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

## xxxv.

" Ah, Porphyro ! " said she, " but even now  
 Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,  
 Made tuneable with every sweetest vow ;  
 And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear :  
 How changed thou art ! how pallid, chill, and drear !  
 Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,  
 Those looks immortal, those complainings dear !  
 Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,  
 For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

## xxxvi.

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far  
 At these voluptuous accents, he arose,  
 Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star  
 Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose ;  
 Into her dream he melted, as the rose  
 Blendeth its odour with the violet,—  
 Solution sweet : meantime the frost-wind blows  
 Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet  
 Against the window-panes ; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

## xxxvii.

'Tis dark : quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet :  
 " This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline ! "  
 'Tis dark : the iced gusts still rave and beat :  
 " No dream, alas ! alas ! and woe is mine !  
 Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—  
 Cruel ! what traitor could thee hither bring ?  
 I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,  
 Though thou forsakest a deceived thing ;—  
 A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

## XXXVIII.

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!  
 Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?  
 Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?  
 Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest  
 After so many hours of toil and quest,  
 A famish'd pilgrim,—saved by miracle.  
 Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest  
 Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well  
 To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel."

## XXXIX.

"Hark! 'tis an elfin storm from faery land,  
 Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:  
 Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—  
 The bloated wassailers will never heed:—  
 Let us away, my love, with happy speed:  
 There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—  
 Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:  
 Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,  
 For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

## XL.

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,  
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,  
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—  
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found,  
 In all the house was heard no human sound.  
 A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;  
 The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,  
 Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;  
 And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

## XLI.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall !  
Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,  
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,  
With a huge empty flagon by his side :  
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,  
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns :  
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide :—  
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones ;  
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.





## XLII.

And they are gone : ay, ages long ago  
These lovers fled away into the storm.  
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,  
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form  
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,  
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old  
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform ;  
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,  
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes clod.







HYPERION.





## HYPERION.

### BOOK I.

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale  
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,  
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,  
Sat grey-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,

Still as the silence round about his lair ;  
Forest on forest hung about his head  
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,  
Not so much life as on a summer's day  
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,  
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.  
A stream went voiceless by, still deaden'd more  
By reason of his fallen divinity  
Spreading a shade : the Naiad 'mid her reeds  
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,  
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,  
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground  
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,  
Unscptred ; and his realmless eyes were closed ;  
While his bow'd head seem'd listening to the Earth,  
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place ;  
But there came one, who with a kindred hand  
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low  
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.  
She was a Goddess of the infant world ;  
By her in stature the tall Amazon  
Had stood a pigmy's height : she would have ta'en  
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck ;  
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel.  
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,  
Pedestal'd haply in a palace-court,  
When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.  
But oh ! how unlike marble was that face :

How beautiful, if sorrow had not made  
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.  
There was a listening fear in her regard,  
As if calamity had but begun ;  
As if the vanward clouds of evil days  
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear  
Was with its stored thunder labouring up.  
One hand she press'd upon that aching spot  
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,  
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain :  
The other upon Saturn's bended neck  
She laid, and to the level of his ear  
Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake  
In solemn tenour and deep organ tone :  
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue  
Would come in these like accents ; O how frail  
To that large utterance of the early Gods !  
" Saturn, look up !—though wherefore, poor old King ?  
I have no comfort for thee, no not one :  
I cannot say, ' O wherefore sleepest thou ?'  
For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth  
Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God ;  
And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,  
Has from thy sceptre pass'd ; and all the air  
Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.  
Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,  
Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house ;  
And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands  
Scorches and burns our once serene domain.  
O aching time ! O moments big as years !  
All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,  
And press it so upon our weary griefs

That unbelief has not a space to breathe.  
 Saturn, sleep on :—O thoughtless, why did I  
 Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude ?  
 Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes ?  
 Saturn, sleep on ! while at thy feet I weep.”

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,  
 Those green-robed senators of mighty woods,  
 Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,  
 Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,  
 Save from one gradual solitary gust  
 Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,  
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave :  
 So came these words and went ; the while in tears  
 She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground,  
 Just where her falling hair might be outspread  
 A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.  
 One moon, with alteration slow, had shed  
 Her silver seasons four upon the night,  
 And still these two were postured motionless,  
 Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern ;  
 The frozen God still couchant on the earth,  
 And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet :  
 Until at length old Saturn lifted up  
 His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,  
 And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,  
 And that fair kneeling Goddess ; and then spake  
 As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard  
 Shook horrid with such aspen-malady :  
 “ O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,  
 Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face ;  
 Look up, and let me see our doom in it ;



Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape  
 Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice  
 Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,  
 Naked and bare of its great diadem,  
 Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power  
 To make me desolate? whence came the strength?



How was it nurtured to such bursting forth,  
 While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp?  
 But it is so; and I am smother'd up,  
 And buried from all godlike exercise  
 Of influence benign on planets pale,  
 Of admonitions to the winds and seas,  
 Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,  
 And all those acts which Deity supreme  
 Doth ease its heart of love in. I am gone

Away from my own bosom : I have left  
 My strong identity, my real self,  
 Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit  
 Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search !  
 Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round  
 Upon all space : space starr'd, and lorn of light :  
 Space region'd with life-air, and barren void ;  
 Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.  
 Search, Thea, search ! and tell me if thou seest  
 A certain shape or shadow, making way  
 With wings or chariot fierce to repossess  
 A heaven he lost erewhile : it must—it must  
 Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be king.  
 Yes, there must be a golden victory ;  
 There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown  
 Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival  
 Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,  
 Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir  
 Of strings in hollow shells ; and there shall be  
 Beautiful things made new, for the surprise  
 Of the sky-children ; I will give command :  
 Thea ! Thea ! Thea ! where is Saturn ?”

This passion lifted him upon his feet,  
 And made his hands to struggle in the air,  
 His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,  
 His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.  
 He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep ;  
 A little time, and then again he snatch'd  
 Utterance thus :—“ But cannot I create ?  
 Cannot I form ? Cannot I fashion forth  
 Another world, another universe,

To overbear and crumble this to nought ?  
Where is another chaos ? Where ?” That word  
Found way unto Olympus, and made quake  
The rebel three. Thea was startled up,  
And in her bearing was a sort of hope,  
As thus she quick-voiced spake, yet full of awe.



“This cheers our fallen house : come to our friends,  
O Saturn ! come away, and give them heart ;  
I know the covert, for thence came I hither.”  
Thus brief ; then with beseeching eyes she went  
With backward footing through the shade a space :  
He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the way

Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist  
Which eagles cleave, upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,  
More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,  
Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe :  
The Titans fierce, self-bid, or prison-bound,  
Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,  
And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.  
But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept  
His sovereignty, and rule, and majesty ;  
Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire  
Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up  
From man to the sun's God, yet unsecure :  
For as among us mortals omens drear  
Fright and perplex, so also shudder'd he,  
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,  
Or the familiar visiting of one  
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,  
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp ;  
But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,  
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright,  
Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,  
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,  
Glared a blood-red through all its thousand courts,  
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries ;  
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds  
Flush'd angrily : while sometimes eagles' wings,  
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,  
Darken'd the place ; and neighing steeds were heard,  
Not heard before by Gods or wondering men.  
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths

Of incense, breathed aloft from sacred hills,  
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took  
Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick :  
And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west,  
After the full completion of fair day,  
For rest divine upon exalted couch,  
And slumber in the arms of melody,  
He paced away the pleasant hours of ease  
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall ;  
While far within each aisle and deep recess.  
His winged minions in close clusters stood,  
Amazed and full of fear ; like anxious men  
Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,  
When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.  
Even now, while Saturn, roused from icy trance,  
Went step for step with Thea through the woods,  
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,  
Came slope upon the threshold of the west :  
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope  
In smoothed silence, save what solemn tubes,  
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet  
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies ;  
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,  
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,  
That inlet to severe magnificence  
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath ;  
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,  
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,  
That scared away the meek ethereal Hours  
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,

From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,  
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,  
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,  
Until he reach'd the great main cupola ;  
There standing fierce beneath, he stampt his foot,  
And from the basements deep to the high towers  
Jarr'd his own golden region ; and before  
The quavering thunder thereupon had ceased,  
His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,  
To this result : " O dreams of day and night !  
O monstrous forms ! O effigies of pain !  
O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom !  
O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools !  
Why do I know ye ? why have I seen ye ? why  
Is my eternal essence thus distraught  
To see and to behold these horrors new ?  
Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall ?  
Am I to leave this haven of my rest,  
This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,  
This calm luxuriance of blissful light,  
These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,  
Of all my lucent empire ? It is left  
Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.  
The blaze, the splendour, and the symmetry,  
I cannot see—but darkness, death and darkness.  
Even here, into my centre of repose,  
The shady visions come to domineer,  
Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp—  
Fall!—No, by Tellus and her briny robes !  
Over the fiery frontier of my realms  
I will advance a terrible right arm  
Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,



And bid old Saturn take his throne again.”  
He spake, and ceased, the while a heavier threat  
Held struggle with his throat, but came not forth ;  
For as in theatres of crowded men  
Hubbub increases more they call out “ Hush !”

So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale  
Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold ;  
And from the mirror'd level where he stood  
A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.  
At this, through all his bulk an agony  
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,  
Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular  
Making slow way, with head and neck convulsed  
From over-strained might. Released, he fled  
To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours  
Before the dawn in season due should blush,  
He breathed fierce breath against the sleepy portals,  
Clear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them wide  
Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.  
The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode  
Each day from east to west the heavens through,  
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds ;  
Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,  
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,  
Circles, and ares, and broad-belted colure,  
Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling dark  
Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep  
Up to the zenith—hieroglyphics old,  
Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers  
Then living on the earth, with labouring thought  
Won from the gaze of many centuries :  
Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge  
Of stone, or marble swart ; their import gone,  
Their wisdom long since fled. Two wings this orb  
Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,  
Ever exalted at the God's approach :  
And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense



Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded were ;  
While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,  
Awaiting for Hyperion's command.  
Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne  
And bid the day begin, if but for change.  
He might not :—No, though a primeval God :  
The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.  
Therefore the operations of the dawn  
Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis told.  
Those silver wings expanded sisterly,  
Eager to sail their orb ; the porches wide  
Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night :  
And the bright Titan, frenzied with new woes,  
Unused to bend, by hard compulsion bent  
His spirit to the sorrow of the time ;  
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,  
Upon the boundaries of day and night,  
He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.  
There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars  
Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice  
Of Cœlus, from the universal space,  
Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear :  
“ O brightest of my children dear, earth-born  
And sky-engender'd, Son of Mysteries !  
All unrevealed even to the powers  
Which met at thy creating ! at whose joys  
And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,  
I, Cœlus, wonder how they came and whence ;  
And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,  
Distinct, and visible ; symbols divine,  
Manifestations of that beauteous life  
Diffused unseen throughout eternal space ;

Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest child!  
 Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses!  
 There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion  
 Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,



I saw my firstborn tumbled from his throne!  
 To me his arms were spread, to me his voice  
 Found way from forth the thunders round his head!  
 Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face.  
 Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear there is:

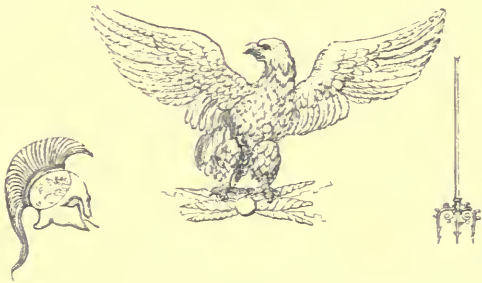
For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.  
Divine ye were created, and divine  
In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd,  
Unruffled, like high Gods, ye lived and ruled :  
Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath ;  
Actions of rage and passion ; even as  
I see them, on the mortal world beneath,  
In men who die.—This is the grief, O Son !  
Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall !  
Yet do thou strive ; as thou art capable,  
As thou canst move about, an evident God,  
And canst oppose to each malignant hour  
Ethereal presence :—I am but a voice ;  
My life is but the life of winds and tides,—  
No more than winds and tides can I avail :—  
But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the van  
Of circumstance ; yea, seize the arrow's barb  
Before the tense string murmur.—To the earth !  
For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.  
Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,  
And of thy seasons be a careful nurse.”—  
Ere half this region-whisper had come down  
Hyperion arose, and on the stars  
Lifted his curvèd lids, and kept them wide  
Until it ceased ; and still he kept them wide :  
And still they were the same bright, patient stars.  
Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,  
Like to a diver in the pearly seas,  
Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,  
And plunged all noiseless into the deep night.





BOOK II.





## BOOK II.

JUST at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings  
Hyperion slid into the rustled air,  
And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place  
Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.



It was a den where no insulting light  
Could glimmer on their tears ; where their own groans  
They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar  
Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,  
Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.  
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd  
Ever as if just rising from a sleep,  
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns ;  
And thus in thousand hugest phantasies  
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.  
Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,  
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge  
Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled :  
Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.  
Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,  
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon,  
With many more, the brawniest in assault,  
Were pent in regions of laborious breath ;  
Dungeon'd in opaque element to keep  
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs  
Locked up like veins of metal, cramped and screwed ;  
Without a motion, save of their big hearts  
Heaving in pain, and horribly convulsed  
With sanguine, feverous, boiling gurge of pulse.  
Mnemosyne was straying in the world ;  
Far from her moon had Phœbe wanderèd ;  
And many else were free to roam abroad,  
But for the main, here found they covert drear.  
Scarce images of life, one here, one there,  
Lay vast and edgeways ; like a dismal cirque  
Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,  
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,



In dull November, and their chancel vault,  
The heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.  
Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave  
Or word, or look, or action of despair.  
Creüs was one ; his ponderous iron mace  
Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock  
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.  
Iapetus another ; in his grasp,  
A serpent's plashy neck ; its barbed tongue  
Squeezed from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length  
Dead ; and because the creature could not spit  
Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.  
Next Cottus : prone he lay, chin uppermost,  
As though in pain ; for still upon the flint  
He ground severe his skull, with open mouth  
And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him  
Asia, born of most enormous Caf,  
Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,  
Though feminine, than any of her sons :  
More thought than woe was in her dusky face,  
For she was prophesying of her glory ;  
And in her wide imagination stood  
Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,  
By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles.  
Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,  
So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk  
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.  
Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelfe,  
Upon his elbow raised, all prostrate else,  
Shadow'd Enceladus ; once tame and mild  
As grazing ox unworried in the meads ;  
Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wrath,

He meditated, plotted, and even now  
Was hurling mountains in that second war,  
Not long delay'd, that scared the younger Gods  
To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.  
Not far hence Atlas; and beside him prone  
Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd close  
Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap  
Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.  
In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet  
Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight;  
No shape distinguishable, more than when  
Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds:  
And many else whose names may not be told.  
For when the muse's wings are air-ward spread,  
Who shall delay her flight? And she must chant  
Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climbed  
With damp and slippery footing from a depth  
More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff  
Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew  
Till on the level height their steps found ease:  
Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms  
Upon the precincts of this nest of pain,  
And sidelong fixed her eye on Saturn's face:  
There saw she direst strife; the supreme God  
At war with all the frailty of grief,  
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,  
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.  
Against these plagues he strove in vain: for Fate  
Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,  
A disanointing poison: so that Thea,  
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass  
First onwards in, among the fallen tribe.

As with us mortal men, the laden heart  
Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,  
When it is nighing to the mournful house  
Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise ;  
So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,  
Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,  
But that he met Enceladus's eye,  
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once  
Came like an inspiration ; and he shouted,  
"Titans, behold your God !" at which some groan'd ;  
Some started on their feet ; some also shouted ;  
Some wept, some wail'd—all bow'd with reverence ;  
And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,  
Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,  
Her eyebrows thin and jet, and hollow eyes.  
There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines  
When Winter lifts his voice ; there is a noise  
Among immortals when a God gives sign,  
With hushing finger, how he means to load  
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought,  
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp :  
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines ;  
Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,  
No other sound succeeds ; but ceasing here,  
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom  
Grew up like organ, that begins anew  
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,  
Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.  
Thus grew it up :—" Not in my own sad breast,  
Which is its own great judge and searcher out,  
Can I find reason why ye should be thus :  
Not in the legends of the first of days,

Studied from that old spirit-leaved book  
Which starry Uranus with finger bright  
Saved from the shores of darkness, when the waves  
Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom ;  
And the which book ye know I ever kept  
For my firm-based footstool :—Ah, infirm !  
Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent  
Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,—  
At war, at peace, or inter-quarrelling  
One against one, or two, or three, or all,  
Each several one against the other three,  
As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods  
Drown both, and press them both against earth's face,  
Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath  
Unhinges the poor world ;—not in that strife,  
Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,  
Can I find reason why ye should be thus :  
No, nowhere can unriddle, though I search,  
And pore on Nature's universal scroll  
Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,  
The first-born of all shaped and palpable Gods,  
Should cower beneath what, in comparison,  
Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here,  
O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye are here !  
O Titans, shall I say ' Arise ! '—Ye groan :  
Shall I say ' Crouch ! '—Ye groan. What can I then ?  
O Heaven wide ! O unseen parent dear !  
What can I ? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods,  
How we can war, how engine our great wrath !  
O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear  
Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,  
Ponderest high and deep ; and in thy face

I see, astonished, that severe content  
Which comes of thought and musing: give us help!"

So ended Saturn; and the God of the Sea,  
Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,  
But cogitation in his watery shades,  
Arose, with locks not oozy, and began,  
In murmurs, which his first endeavouring tongue  
Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands.  
"O ye, whom wrath consumes! who, passion-stung,  
Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies!  
Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,  
My voice is not a bellows unto ire.  
Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof  
How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop:  
And in the proof much comfort will I give,  
If ye will take that comfort in its truth.  
We fall by course of Nature's law, not force  
Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou  
Hast sifted well the atom-universe;  
But for this reason, that thou art the King,  
And only blind from sheer supremacy,  
One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,  
Through which I wander'd to eternal truth.  
And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,  
So art thou not the last; it cannot be.  
Thou art not the beginning nor the end.  
From chaos and parental darkness came  
Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,  
That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends  
Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,  
And with it light, and light engendering

Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd  
The whole enormous matter into life.  
Upon that very hour, our parentage,  
The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest :  
Then thou first-born, and we the giant-race,  
Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.  
Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain ;  
O folly ! for to bear all naked truths,  
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,  
That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well !  
As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far  
Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs ;  
And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth  
In form and shape compact and beautiful,  
In will, in action free, companionship,  
And thousand other signs of purer life ;  
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,  
A power more strong in beauty, born of us  
And fated to excel us, as we pass  
In glory that old Darkness : nor are we  
Thereby more conquered than by us the rule  
Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil  
Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,  
And feedeth still, more comely than itself ?  
Can it deny the chieftom of green groves ?  
Or shall the tree be envious of the dove  
Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings  
To wander wherewithal and find its joys ?  
We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs  
Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,  
But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower  
Above us in their beauty, and must reign

In right thereof; for 'tis the eternal law  
That first in beauty should be first in might :  
Yea, by that law, another race may drive  
Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.  
Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,



My dispossessor? Have ye seen his face?  
Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along  
By noble winged creatures he hath made?  
I saw him on the calmed waters scud,  
With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,  
That it enforced me to bid sad farewell

To all my empire : farewell sad I took,  
And hither came, to see how dolorous fate  
Had wrought upon ye ; and how I might best  
Give consolation in this woe extreme.  
Receive the truth, and let it be your balm."

Whether through pozed conviction, or disdain,  
They guarded silence, when Oceanus  
Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell ?  
But so it was, none answer'd for a space,  
Save one whom none regarded, Clymene :  
And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,  
With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild,  
Thus wording timidly among the fierce :  
" O Father ! I am here the simplest voice,  
And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,  
And this thing woe erept in among our hearts,  
There to remain for ever, as I fear :  
I would not bode of evil, if I thought  
So weak a creature could turn off the help  
Which by just right should come of mighty Gods ;  
Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell  
Of what I heard, and how it made me weep,  
And know that we had parted from all hope.  
I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,  
Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land  
Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.  
Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief ;  
Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth ;  
So that I felt a movement in my heart  
To chide, and to reproach that solitude  
With songs of misery, music of our woes ;



And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell  
 And murmur'd into it, and made melody—  
 O melody no more! for while I sang,  
 And with poor skill let pass into the breeze  
 The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand  
 Just opposite, an island of the sea,  
 There came enchantment with the shifting wind  
 That did both drown and keep alive my ears.  
 I threw my shell away upon the sand,  
 And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd  
 With that new blissful golden melody.  
 A living death was in each gush of sounds,  
 Each family of rapturous hurried notes,  
 That fell, one after one, yet all at once,  
 Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string:  
 And then another, then another strain,  
 Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,  
 With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,  
 To hover round my head, and make me sick  
 Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,  
 And I was stopping up my frantic ears,  
 When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,  
 A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,  
 And still it cried, 'Apollo! young Apollo!  
 The morning-bright Apollo! young Apollo!'  
 I fled, it follow'd me, and cried 'Apollo!'  
 O Father, and O Brethren! had ye felt  
 Those pains of mine! O Saturn, hadst thou felt,  
 Ye would not call this too indulged tongue  
 Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard!"

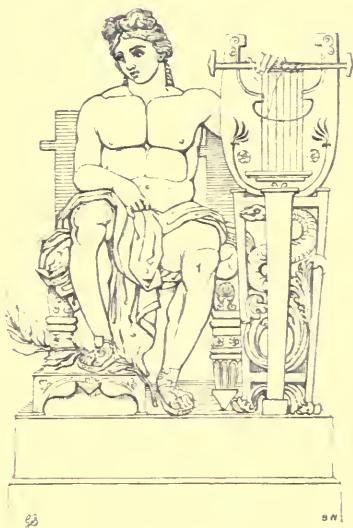
So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous brook

That, lingering along a pebbled coast,  
Doth fear to meet the sea : but sea it met,  
And shudder'd ; for the overwhelming voice  
Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath :  
The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves  
In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,  
Came booming thus, while still upon his arm  
He lean'd ; not rising, from supreme contempt.  
“ Or shall we listen to the over-wise,  
Or to the over-foolish giant, Gods ?  
Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all  
That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,  
Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,  
Could agonise me more than baby-words  
In midst of this dethronement horrible.  
Speak ! roar ! shout ! yell ! ye sleepy Titans all.  
Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile ?  
Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm ?  
Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,  
Thy scalding in the seas ? What ! have I roused  
Your spleens with so few simple words as these ?  
O joy ! for now I see ye are not lost :  
O joy ! for now I see a thousand eyes  
Wide glaring for revenge.”—As this he said,  
He lifted up his stature vast, and stood,  
Still without intermission speaking thus :  
“ Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,  
And purge the ether of our enemies ;  
How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,  
And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove,  
Stifling that puny essence in its tent.  
O let him feel the evil he hath done ;

For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,  
Much pain have I for more than loss of realms :  
The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled ;  
Those days, all innocent of scathing war,  
When all the fair Existences of heaven  
Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak :—  
That was before our brows were taught to frown,  
Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds ;  
That was before we knew the winged thing,  
Victory, might be lost, or might be won.  
And be ye mindful that Hyperion,  
Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced—  
Hyperion, lo ! his radiance is here ! ”

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,  
And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name  
Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,  
A pallid gleam across his features stern :  
Not savage, for he saw full many a God  
Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,  
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,  
But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar locks  
Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel  
When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.  
In pale and silver silence they remain'd,  
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,  
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,  
All the sad spaces of oblivion,  
And every gulf, and every chasm old,  
And every height, and every sullen depth,  
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams :  
And all the everlasting cataracts,

And all the headlong torrents far and near,  
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,  
Now saw the light and made it terrible.  
It was Hyperion :—a granite peak  
His bright feet touch'd, and there he staid to view  
The misery his brilliance had betray'd  
To the most hateful seeing of itself.  
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,  
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade  
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk  
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun  
To one who travels from the dusking East :  
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp,  
He utter'd, while his hands, contemplative,  
He press'd together, and in silence stood.  
Despondence seized again the fallen Gods  
At sight of the dejected King of Day,  
And many hid their faces from the light :  
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes  
Among the brotherhood ; and, at their glare,  
Uprose Iäpetus, and Creüs too,  
And Phoreus, sea-born, and together strode  
To where he tower'd on his emincnce.  
There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name ;  
Hyperion from the peak loud answer'd " Saturn !"  
Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,  
In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods  
Gave from their hollow throats the name of " Saturn !"



### BOOK III.



THUS in alternate uproar and sad peace,  
Amazed were those Titans utterly.  
O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes!  
For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire:  
A solitary sorrow best befits  
Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.  
Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find  
Many a fallen old Divinity  
Wandering in vain about bewilder'd shores.  
Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp,  
And not a wind of heaven but will breathe

In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute ;  
For lo ! 'tis for the Father of all verse.  
Flush everything that hath a vermeil hue,  
Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,  
And let the clouds of even and of morn  
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills ;  
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,  
Cold as a bubbling well ; let faint-lipp'd shells,  
On sands or in great deeps, vermilion turn  
Through all their labyrinths ; and let the maid  
Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surprised.  
Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,  
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,  
And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech,  
In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,  
And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade :  
Apollo is once more the golden theme !  
Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun  
Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers ?  
Together had he left his mother fair  
And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,  
And in the morning twilight wander'd forth  
Beside the osiers of a rivulet,  
Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.  
The nightingale had ceased, and a few stars  
Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush  
Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle  
There was no covert, no retired cave  
Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves,  
Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.  
He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears  
Went trickling down the golden bow he held.

Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,  
While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by  
With solemn step an awful Goddess came,  
And there was purport in her looks for him,  
Which he with eager guess began to read  
Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said :  
“ How camest thou over the unfooted sea ?  
Or hath that antique mien and robed form  
Moved in these vales invisible till now ?  
Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er  
The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone  
In cool mid forest. Surely I have traced  
The rustle of those ample skirts about  
These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers  
Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.  
Goddess ! I have beheld those eyes before,  
And their eternal calm, and all that face,  
Or I have dream'd.” — “ Yes,” said the supreme shape,  
“ Thou hast dream'd of me ; and awaking up  
Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,  
Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast  
Unwearied ear of the whole universe  
Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth  
Of such new tuneful wonder. Is 't not strange  
That thou shouldst weep, so gifted ? Tell me, youth,  
What sorrow thou canst feel ; for I am sad  
When thou dost shed a tear : explain thy griefs  
To one who in this lonely isle hath been  
The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,  
From the young day when first thy infant hand  
Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm  
Could bend that bow heroic to all times.



Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power  
Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones  
For prophecies of thee, and for the sake  
Of loveliness new-born."—Apollo then,  
With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes,  
Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat  
Throbb'd with the syllables :—" Mnemosyne !  
Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how ;  
Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest ?  
Why should I strive to show what from thy lips  
Would come no mystery ? For me, dark, dark,  
And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes :  
I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,  
Until a melancholy numbs my limbs ;  
And then upon the grass I sit, and moan,  
Like one who once had wings.—O why should I  
Feel cursed and thwarted, when the liegeless air  
Yields to my step aspirant ? why should I  
Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet ?  
Goddess benign ! point forth some unknown thing :



Are there not other regions than this isle ?  
What are the stars ? There is the sun, the sun !  
And the most patient brilliance of the moon !  
And stars by thousands ! Point me out the way  
To any one particular beauteous star,  
And I will flit into it with my lyre,  
And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.  
I have heard the cloudy thunder : Where is power ?  
Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity  
Makes this alarum in the elements,  
While I here idle listen on the shores  
In fearless yet in aching ignorance ?  
O tell me, lonely Goddess ! by thy harp,  
That wailleth every morn and eventide,  
Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves !  
Mute thou remainest—Mute ? yet I can read  
A wondrous lesson in thy silent face :  
Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.  
Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions,  
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,  
Creations and destroyings, all at once  
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,  
And deify me, as if some blithe wine  
Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,  
And so become immortal.”—Thus the God,  
While his enkindled eyes, with level glance  
Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast kept  
Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.  
Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush  
All the immortal fairness of his limbs :  
Most like the struggle at the gate of death ;  
Or liker still to one who should take leave

Of pale immortal death, and with a pang  
 As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse  
 Die into life : so young Apollo anguish'd ;  
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed  
 Kept undulation round his eager neck.  
 During the pain Mnemosyne upheld  
 Her arms as one who prophesied.—At length  
 Apollo shriek'd ;—and lo ! from all his limbs  
 Celestial \* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



What more felicity can fall to creature  
Than to enjoy delight with liberty?

*Fate of the Butterfly.*—SPENSER.

DEDICATION.



TO LEIGH HUNT, ESQ.

GLORY and loveliness have pass'd away ;  
For if we wander out in early morn,  
No wreathed incense do we see upborne  
Into the east to meet the smiling day :  
No crowds of nymphs soft-voiced and young and gay,  
In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,  
Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn  
The shrine of Flora in her early May.  
But there are left delights as high as these.  
And I shall ever bless my destiny,  
That in a time when under pleasant trees  
Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free,  
A leafy luxury, seeing I could please  
With these poor offerings, a man like thee.





Places of nestling green for poets made.—*Story of Rimini.*

I stood tiptoe upon a little hill,  
The air was cooling, and so very still,  
That the sweet buds which with a modest pride  
Pull droopingly, in slanting curve aside,  
Their scanty-leaved, and finely-tapering stems,  
Had not yet lost their starry diadems  
Caught from the early sobbing of the morn.  
The clouds were pure and white as flocks new-shorn,  
And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly they slept  
On the blue fields of heaven, and then there crept  
A little noiseless noise among the leaves,

Born of the very sigh that silence heaves ;  
For not the faintest motion could be seen  
Of all the shades that slanted o'er the green.  
There was wide wandering for the greediest eye,  
To peer about upon variety ;  
Far round the horizon's crystal air to skim,  
And trace the dwindled edgings of its brim ;  
To picture out the quaint and curious bending  
Of a fresh woodland alley never-ending :  
Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,  
Guess where the jaunty streams refresh themselves.  
I gazed awhile, and felt as light, and free  
As though the fanning wings of Mercury  
Had play'd upon my heels : I was light-hearted,  
And many pleasures to my vision started ;  
So I straightway began to pluck a posy  
Of luxuries bright, milky, soft and rosy.  
A bush of May-flowers with the bees about them ;  
Ah, sure no tasteful nook could be without them !  
And let a lush laburnum oversweep them,  
And let long grass grow round the roots, to keep them  
Moist, cool and green ; and shade the violets,  
That they may bind the moss in leafy nets.

A filbert-hedge with wild-briar overtwin'd,  
And clumps of woodbine taking the soft wind  
Upon their summer thrones ; there too should be  
The frequent-chequer of a youngling tree,  
That with a score of light green brethren shoots  
From the quaint mossiness of aged roots :  
Round which is heard a spring-head of clear waters,  
Babbling so wildly of its lovely daughters,

The spreading blue-bells : it may haply mourn  
That such fair clusters should be rudely torn  
From their fresh beds, and scatter'd thoughtlessly  
By infant hands, left on the path to die.

Open afresh your round of starry folds,  
Ye ardent marigolds !  
Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,  
For great Apollo bids  
That in these days your praises should be sung  
On many harps, which he has lately strung ;  
And when again your dewiness he kisses,  
Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses :  
So haply when I rove in some far vale,  
His mighty voice may come upon the gale.

Here are sweet peas, on tiptoe for a flight :  
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,  
And taper fingers catching at all things,  
To bind them all about with tiny rings.  
Linger awhile upon some bending planks  
That lean against a streamlet's rushy banks,  
And watch intently Nature's gentle doings :  
They will be found softer than ringdoves' cooings.  
How silent comes the water round that bend !  
Not the minutest whisper does it send  
To the o'erhanging shallows : blades of grass  
Slowly across the chequer'd shadows pass.  
Why you might read two sonnets, ere they reach  
To where the hurrying freshnesses aye preach  
A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds ;  
Where swarms of minnows show their little heads,

Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams,  
To taste the luxury of sunny beams  
Temper'd with coolness. How they ever wrestle  
With their own sweet delight, and ever nestle  
Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand!  
If you but scantily hold out the hand,  
That very instant not one will remain;  
But turn your eye, and they are there again.  
The ripples seem right glad to reach those cresses,  
And cool themselves among the emerald tresses;  
The while they cool themselves, they freshness give,  
And moisture, that the bowery green may live:  
So keeping up an interchange of favours,  
Like good men in the truth of their behaviours.  
Sometimes goldfinches one by one will drop  
From low-hung branches: little space they stop;  
But sip, and twitter, and their feathers sleek;  
Then off at once, as in a wanton freak:  
Or perhaps, to show their black and golden wings,  
Pausing upon their yellow flutterings.  
Were I in such a place, I sure should pray  
That nought less sweet, might call my thoughts away,  
Than the soft rustle of a maiden's gown  
Fanning away the dandelion's down;  
Than the light music of her nimble toes  
Patting against the sorrel as she goes.  
How she would start, and blush, thus to be caught  
Playing in all her innocence of thought!  
O let me lead her gently o'er the brook,  
Watch her half-smiling lips and downward look;  
O let me for one moment touch her wrist;  
Let me one moment to her breathing list;



And as she leaves me, may she often turn  
Her fair eyes looking through her locks auburne.  
What next? a tuft of evening primroses,  
O'er which the mind may hover till it dozes;  
O'er which it well might take a pleasant sleep,  
But that 'tis ever startled by the leap  
Of buds into ripe flowers; or by the flitting  
Of divers moths, that aye their rest are quitting;  
Or by the moon lifting her silver rim  
Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim  
Coming into the blue with all her light.  
O Maker of sweet poets! dear delight  
Of this fair world and all its gentle livers;  
Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,  
Mingler with leaves, and dew and tumbling streams,  
Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams,  
Lover of loneliness, and waudering,  
Of upcast eye, and tender pondering!  
Thee must I praise above all other glories  
That smile us on to tell delightful stories.  
For what has made the sage or poet write  
But the fair paradise of Nature's light?  
In the calm grandeur of a sober line,  
We see the waving of the mountain pine;  
And when a tale is beautifully staid,  
We feel the safety of a hawthorn glade:  
When it is moving on luxurious wings,  
The soul is lost in pleasant smotherings:  
Fair dewy roses brush against our faces,  
And flowering laurels spring from diamond vases;  
O'erhead we see the jasmine and sweet-briar,  
And bloomy grapes laughing from green attire;

While at our feet, the voice of crystal bubbles  
 Charms us at once away from all our troubles :  
 So that we feel uplifted from the world,  
 Walking upon the white clouds wreath'd and curl'd.  
 So felt he, who first told how Psyche went  
 On the smooth wind to realms of wonderment ;  
 What Psyche felt, and Love, when their full lips  
 First touch'd ; what amorous and fondling nips  
 They gave each other's cheeks ; with all their sighs,  
 And how they kist each other's tremulous eyes :



The silver lamp,—the ravishment—the wonder—  
 The darkness—loneliness—the fearful thunder ;  
 Their woes gone by, and both to heaven up flown,  
 To bow for gratitude before Jove's throne.  
 So did he feel, who pull'd the boughs aside,  
 That we might look into a forest wide,  
 To catch a glimpse of Fauns, and Dryades

Coming with softest rustle through the trees ;  
And garlands woven of flowers wild, and sweet,  
Upheld on ivory wrists, or sporting feet :  
Telling us how fair trembling Syrinx fled  
Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread.  
Poor Nymph,—poor Pan,—how did he weep to find  
Nought but a lovely sighing of the wind  
Along the reedy stream ! a half-heard strain,  
Full of sweet desolation—balmy pain.

What first inspired a bard of old to sing  
Narcissus pining o'er the untainted spring ?  
In some delicious ramble, he had found  
A little space, with boughs all woven round ;  
And in the midst of all, a clearer pool  
Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool  
The blue sky, here and there serenely peeping.  
Through tendril wreaths fantastically creeping.  
And on the bank a lonely flower he spied,  
A meek and forlorn flower, with nought of pride,  
Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clearness,  
To woo its own sad image into nearness :  
Deaf to light Zephyrus it would not move ;  
But still would seem to droop, to pine, to love.  
So while the poet stood in this sweet spot,  
Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy shot ;  
Nor was it long ere he had told the tale  
Of young Narcissus, and sad Echo's bale.

Where he had been, from whose warm head outflew  
That sweetest of all songs, that ever new,  
That eye refreshing, pure deliciousness,

Coming ever to bless  
 The wanderer by moonlight? to him bringing  
 Shapes from the invisible world, unearthly singing  
 From out the middle air, from flowery nests,  
 And from the pillowy silkiness that rests  
 Full in the speculation of the stars.  
 Ah! surely he had burst our mortal bars ;  
 Into some wondrous region he had gone,  
 To search for thee, divine Endymion !

He was a Poet, sure a lover too,  
 Who stood on Latmus' top, what time there blew  
 Soft breezes from the myrtle vale below ;  
 And brought, in faintness solemn, sweet, and slow,  
 A hymn from Dian's temple ; while upswelling,  
 The incense went to her own starry dwelling.  
 But though her face was clear as infants' eyes,  
 Though she stood smiling o'er the sacrifice,  
 The poet wept at her so piteous fate,  
 Wept that such beauty should be desolate :  
 So in fine wrath some golden sounds he won,  
 And gave meek Cynthia her Endymion.

Queen of the wide air ; thou most lovely queen  
 Of all the brightness that mine eyes have seen !  
 As thou exceedest all things in thy shine,  
 So every tale, does this sweet tale of thine.  
 O for three words of honey, that I might  
 Tell but one wonder of thy bridal night !

Where distant ships do seem to show their keels,  
 Phœbus awhile delay'd his mighty wheels,

And turn'd to smile upon thy bashful eyes,  
Ere he his unseen pomp would solemnise.  
The evening weather was so bright, and clear,  
That men of health were of unusual cheer ;  
Stepping like Homer at the trumpet's call,  
Or young Apollo on the pedestal :  
And lovely women were as fair and warm,  
As Venus looking sideways in alarm.  
The breezes were ethereal, and pure,  
And crept through half-closed lattices to cure  
The languid sick : it cool'd their fever'd sleep,  
And soothed them into slumbers full and deep.  
Soon they awoke clear-eyed : nor burn'd with thirsting,  
Nor with hot fingers, nor with temples bursting :  
And springing up, they met the wondering sight  
Of their dear friends, nigh foolish with delight ;  
Who feel their arms, and breasts, and kiss, and stare,  
And on their placid foreheads part the hair.  
Young men and maidens at each other gazed,  
With hands held back, and motionless, amazed  
To see the brightness in each other's eyes ;  
And so they stood, fill'd with a sweet surprise,  
Until their tongues were loosed in poesy.  
Therefore no lover did of anguish die :  
But the soft numbers, in that moment spoken,  
Made silken ties, that never may be broken.  
Cynthia ! I cannot tell the greater blisses  
That follow'd thine, and thy dear shepherd's kisses :  
Was there a poet born ?—But now no more—  
My wandering spirit must no farther soar.



SPECIMEN OF AN INDUCTION TO A POEM.

---

Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry ;  
For large white plumes are dancing in mine eye.  
Not like the formal crest of latter days :  
But bending in a thousand graceful ways ;  
So graceful, that it seems no mortal hand,  
Or e'en the touch of Archimago's wand,  
Could charm them into such an attitude.  
We must think rather, that in playful mood,  
Some mountain breeze had turn'd its chief delight  
To show this wonder of its gentle might.  
Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry ;  
For while I muse, the lance points slantingly  
Athwart the morning air : some lady sweet,  
Who cannot feel for cold her tender feet,  
From the worn top of some old battlement  
Hails it with tears, her stout defender sent ;

And from her own pure self no joy dissembling,  
Wraps round her ample robe with happy trembling.  
Sometimes when the good knight his rest could take,  
It is reflected, clearly, in a lake,  
With the young ashen boughs, 'gainst which it rests,  
And th' half-seen mossiness of linnets' nests.  
Ah! shall I ever tell its cruelty,  
When the fire flashes from a warrior's eye,  
And his tremendous hand is grasping it,  
And his dark brow for very wrath is knit?  
Or when his spirit, with more calm intent  
Leaps to the honours of a tournament,  
And makes the gazers round about the ring  
Stare at the grandeur of the balancing?  
No, no! this is far off:—then how shall I  
Revive the dying tones of minstrelsy,  
Which linger yet about long gothic arches,  
In dark green ivy, and among wild larches?  
How sing the splendour of the revelries,  
When butts of wine are drank off to the lees?  
And that bright lance, against the fretted wall,  
Beneath the shade of stately banneral,  
Is slung with shining cuirass, sword, and shield?  
Where ye may see a spur in bloody field,  
Light-footed damsels move with gentle paces  
Round the wide hall, and show their happy faces;  
Or stand in courtly talk by fives and sevens:  
Like those fair stars that twinkle in the heavens.  
Yet must I tell a tale of chivalry:  
Or wherefore comes that knight so proudly by?  
Wherefore more proudly does the gentle knight  
Rein in the swelling of his ample might?

Spenser! thy brows are arched, open, kind,  
And come like a clear sun-rise to my mind;  
And always does my heart with pleasure dance,  
When I think on thy noble countenance:  
Where never yet was aught more earthly seen  
Than the pure freshness of thy laurels green.  
Therefore, great bard, I not so fearfully  
Call on thy gentle spirit to hover nigh  
My daring steps: or if thy tender care,  
Thus startled unaware,  
Be jealous that the foot of other wight  
Should madly follow that bright path of light  
Traced by thy loved Libertas; he will speak,  
And tell thee that my prayer is very meek;  
That I will follow with due reverence,  
And start with awe at mine own strange pretence.  
Him thou wilt hear; so I will rest in hope  
To see wide plains, fair trees, and lawny slope;  
The morn, the eve, the light, the shade, the flowers;  
Clear streams, smooth lakes, and overlooking towers.







## CALIDORE.

A FRAGMENT.

YOUNG Calidore is paddling o'er the lake ;  
His healthful spirit eager and awake  
To feel the beauty of a silent eve,  
Which seem'd full loth this happy world to leave,  
The light dwelt o'er the scene so lingeringly.  
He bares his forehead to the cool blue sky,  
And smiles at the far clearness all around,  
Until his heart is well nigh overwound,  
And turns for calmness to the pleasant green  
Of easy slopes, and shadowy trees that lean  
So elegantly o'er the waters' brim  
And show their blossoms trim.

Scarce can his clear and nimble eyesight follow  
The freaks and dartings of the black-wing'd swallow,  
Delighting much, to see it half at rest,  
Dip so refreshingly its wings and breast  
'Gainst the smooth surface, and to mark anon,  
The widening circles into nothing gone.

And now the sharp keel of his little boat  
Comes up with ripple, and with easy float  
And glides into a bed of water-lilies:  
Broad-leaved are they, and their white canopies  
Are upward turn'd to catch the heavens' dew.  
Near to a little island's point they grew;  
Whence Calidore might have the goodliest view  
Of this sweet spot of earth. The bowery shore  
Went off in gentle windings to the hoar  
And light blue mountains: but no breathing man  
With a warm heart, and eye prepared to scan  
Nature's clear beauty, could pass lightly by  
Objects that look'd out so invitingly  
On either side. These, gentle Calidore  
Greeted, as he had known them long before.

The sidelong view of swelling leafiness,  
Which the glad setting sun in gold doth dress,  
Whence, ever and anon, the joy outsprings,  
And scales upon the beauty of its wings.

The lonely turret, shatter'd, and outworn,  
Stands venerably proud; too proud to mourn  
Its long-lost grandeur: fir-trees grow around,  
Aye dropping their hard fruit upon the ground.

The little chapel, with the cross above,  
Upholding wreaths of ivy ; the white dove,  
That on the windows spreads his feathers light,  
And seems from purple clouds to wing its flight.

Green tufted islands casting their soft shades  
Across the lake ; sequester'd leafy glades,  
That through the dimness of their twilight show  
Large dock-leaves, spiral foxgloves, or the glow  
Of the wild cat's-eyes, or the silvery stems  
Of delicate birch-trees, or long grass which hems  
A little brook. The youth had long been viewing  
These pleasant things, and heaven was bedewing  
The mountain flowers, when his glad senses caught  
A trumpet's silver voice. Ah ! it was fraught  
With many joys for him : the warder's ken  
Had found white coursers prancing in the glen :  
Friends very dear to him he soon will see ;  
So pushes off his boat most eagerly.  
And soon upon the lake he skims along,  
Deaf to the nightingale's first under-song ;  
Nor minds he the white swans that dream so sweetly :  
His spirit flies before him so completely.  
And now he turns a jutting point of land,  
Whence may be seen the castle gloomy and grand :  
Nor will a bee buzz round two swelling peaches,  
Before the point of his light shallop reaches  
Those marble steps that through the water dip :  
Now over them he goes with hasty trip,  
And scarcely stays to ope the folding doors :  
Anon he leaps along the oaken floors  
Of halls and corridors.

Delicious sounds ! those little bright-eyed things  
That float about the air on azure wings,  
Had been less heartfelt by him than the clang  
Of clattering hoofs ; into the court he sprang,  
Just as two noble steeds, and palfreys twain,  
Were slanting out their necks with loosen'd rein ;  
While from beneath the threatening portcullis  
They brought their happy burthens. What a kiss,  
What gentle squeeze he gave each lady's hand !  
How tremblingly their delicate ankles spann'd !  
Into how sweet a trance his soul was gone,  
While whisperings of affection  
Made him delay to let their tender feet  
Come to the earth ; with an incline so sweet  
From their low palfreys o'er his neck they bent :  
And whether there were tears of languishment,  
Or that the evening dew had pearl'd their tresses,  
He feels a moisture on his cheek, and blesses  
With lips that tremble, and with glistening eye,  
All the soft luxury  
That nestled in his arms. A dimpled hand,  
Fair as some wonder out of fairy land,  
Hung from his shoulder like the drooping flowers  
Of whitest Cassia, fresh from summer showers :  
And this he fondled with his happy cheek,  
As if for joy he would no further seek :  
When the kind voice of good Sir Clerimond  
Came to his ear, like something from beyond  
His present being : so he gently drew  
His warm arms, thrilling now with pulses new,  
From their sweet thrall, and forward gently bending,  
Thank'd Heaven that his joy was never-ending ;

While 'gainst his forehead he devoutly press'd  
A hand Heaven made to succour the distress'd ;  
A hand that from the world's bleak promontory  
Had lifted Calidore for deeds of Glory.



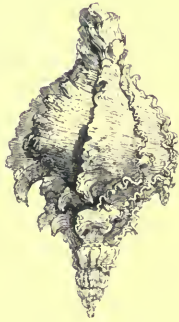
Amid the pages, and the torches' glare,  
There stood a knight, patting the flowing hair  
Of his proud horse's mane : he was withal  
A man of elegance, and stature tall :  
So that the waving of his plumes would be  
High as the berries of a wild ash tree,  
Or as the winged cap of Mercury.

His armour was so dexterously wrought  
In shape, that sure no living man had thought  
It hard, and heavy steel : but that indeed  
It was some glorious form, some splendid weed,  
In which a spirit new come from the skies  
Might live, and show itself to human eyes.  
'Tis the far-famed, the brave Sir Gondibert,  
Said the good man to Calidore alert ;  
While the young warrior with a step of grace  
Came up,—a courtly smile upon his face,  
And mailed hand held out, ready to greet  
The large-eyed wonder, and ambitious heat  
Of the aspiring boy ; who as he led  
Those smiling ladies, often turn'd his head  
To admire the visor arch'd so gracefully  
Over a knightly brow ; while they went by  
The lamps that from the high-roof'd hall were pendent,  
And gave the steel a shining quite transcendent.

Soon in a pleasant chamber they are seated,  
The sweet-lipp'd ladies have already greeted  
All the green leaves that round the window clamber,  
To show their purple stars, and bells of amber.  
Sir Gondibert has doff'd his shining steel,  
Gladdening in the free and airy feel  
Of a light mantle ; and while Clerimond  
Is looking round about him with a fond  
And placid eye, young Calidore is burning  
To hear of knightly deeds, and gallant spurning  
Of all unworthiness ; and how the strong of arm  
Kept off dismay, and terror, and alarm  
From lovely woman : while brimful of this,

He gave each damsel's hand so warm a kiss,  
And had such manly ardour in his eye,  
That each at other look'd half-staringly :  
And then their features started into smiles,  
Sweet as blue heavens o'er enchanted isles.  
Softly the breezes from the forest came,  
Softly they blew aside the taper's flame ;  
Clear was the song from Philomel's far bower ;  
Grateful the incense from the lime-tree flower ;  
Mysterious, wild, the far-heard trumpet's tone ;  
Lovely the moon in ether, all alone :  
Sweet too the converse of these happy mortals,  
As that of busy spirits when the portals  
Are closing in the West ; or that soft humming  
We hear around when Hesperus is coming.  
Sweet be their sleep. \* \* \* \* \*





TO SOME LADIES,

ON RECEIVING A CURIOUS SHELL.

---

WHAT though, while the wonders of nature exploring,  
I cannot your light, mazy footsteps attend ;  
Nor listen to accents, that almost adoring,  
Bless Cynthia's face, the enthusiast's friend :

Yet over the steep, whence the mountain-stream rushes,  
With you, kindest friends, in idea I rove ;  
Mark the clear tumbling crystal, its passionate gushes,  
Its spray, that the wild flower kindly bedews.

Why linger ye so, the wild labyrinth strolling ?  
Why breathless, unable your bliss to declare ?  
Ah ! you list to the nightingale's tender condoling,  
Responsive to sylphs, in the moon-beamy air.



'Tis morn, and the flowers with dew are yet drooping,  
I see you are treading the verge of the sea :  
And now ! ah, I see it—you just now are stooping  
To pick up the keepsake intended for me.

If a cherub, on pinions of silver descending,  
Had brought me a gem from the fretwork of Heaven ;  
And smiles with his star-cheering voice sweetly blending,  
The blessings of Tighe had melodiously given :

It had not created a warmer emotion  
Than the present, fair nymphs, I was blest with from you ;  
Than the shell, from the bright golden sands of the ocean,  
Which the emerald waves at your feet gladly threw.

For, indeed, 'tis a sweet and peculiar pleasure  
(And blissful is he who such happiness finds),  
To possess but a span of the hour of leisure  
In elegant, pure, and aerial minds.





ON RECEIVING A COPY OF VERSES FROM THE  
SAME LADIES.



HAST thou from the caves of Golconda, a gem  
Pure as the ice-drop that froze on the mountain?  
Bright as the humming-bird's green diadem,  
When it flutters in sunbeams that shine through a  
fountain?

Hast thou a goblet for dark sparkling wine?  
That goblet right heavy, and massy, and gold?  
And splendidly mark'd with the story divine  
Of Armida the fair, and Rinaldo the bold?

Hast thou a steed with a mane richly flowing ?  
Hast thou a sword that thine enemy's smart is ?  
Hast thou a trumpet rich melodies blowing ?  
And wear'st thou the shield of the famed Britomartis ?

What is it that hangs from thy shoulder so brave,  
Embroider'd with many a spring-peering flower ?  
Is it a scarf that thy fair lady gave ?  
And hastest thou now to that fair lady's bower ?

Ah ! courteous Sir Knight, with large joy thou art crown'd ;  
Full many the glories that brighten thy youth !  
I will tell thee my blisses, which richly abound  
In magical powers to bless and to soothe.

On this scroll thou seest written in characters fair  
A sun-beaming tale of a wreath, and a chain :  
And, warrior, it nurtures the property rare  
Of charming my mind from the trammels of pain.

This canopy mark : 'tis the work of a fay ;  
Beneath its rich shade did King Oberon languish,  
When lovely Titania was far, far away,  
And cruelly left him to sorrow and anguish.

There, oft would he bring from his soft-sighing lute  
Wild strains to which, spell-bound, the nightingales  
listen'd !  
The wondering spirits of Heaven were mute,  
And tears 'mong the dewdrops of morning oft glisten'd.

In this little dome, all those melodies strange,  
Soft, plaintive, and melting, for ever will sigh ;  
Nor e'er will the notes from their tenderness change,  
Nor e'er will the music of Oberon die.

So when I am in a voluptuous vein,  
I pillow my head on the sweets of the rose,  
And list to the tale of the wreath, and the chain,  
Till its echoes depart ; then I sink to repose.

Adieu ! valiant Eric ! with joy thou art crown'd,  
Full many the glories that brighten thy youth,  
I too have my blisses, which richly abound  
In magical powers to bless, and to soothe.





TO ———.

—♦—

HADST thou lived in days of old,  
O what wonders had been told  
Of thy lively countenance,  
And thy humid eyes, that dance  
In the midst of their own brightness,  
In the very fane of lightness ;  
Over which thine eyebrows, leaning,  
Picture out each lovely meaning :  
In a dainty bend they lie,  
Like the streaks across the sky,  
Or the feathers from a crow,  
Fallen on a bed of snow.

Of thy dark hair, that extends  
Into many graceful bends :  
As the leaves of hellebore  
Turn to whence they sprung before.  
And behind each ample curl  
Peeps the richness of a pearl.  
Downward too flows many a tress  
With a glossy waviness,  
Full, and round like globes that rise  
From the censer to the skies  
Through sunny hair. Add too, the sweetness  
Of thy honied voice ; the neatness  
Of thine ankle lightly turn'd :  
With those beauties scarce discern'd,  
Kept with such sweet privacy,  
That they seldom meet the eye  
Of the little Loves that fly  
Round about with eager pry.  
Saving when with freshening lave,  
Thou dipp'st them in the taintless wave ;  
Like twin water-lilies, born  
In the coolness of the morn.  
O, if thou hadst breathed then,  
Now the Muses had been ten.  
Couldst thou wish for lineage higher  
Than twin-sister of Thalia ?  
At least for ever, evermore  
Will I call the Graces four.  
Hadst thou lived when chivalry  
Lifted up her lance on high,  
Tell me what thou wouldst have been ?  
Ah ! I see the silver sheen

Of thy broider'd-floating vest  
Covering half thine ivory breast :  
Which, O Heavens ! I should see,  
But that cruel Destiny  
Has placed a golden cuirass there,  
Keeping secret what is fair.  
Like sunbeams in a cloudlet nested,  
Thy locks in knightly casque are rested :  
O'er which bend four milky plumes,  
Like the gentle lily's blooms  
Springing from a costly vase.  
See with what a stately pace  
Comes thine alabaster steed ;  
Servant of heroic deed !  
O'er his loins, his trappings glow  
Like the northern lights on snow.  
Mount his back ! thy sword unsheath !  
Sign of the enchanter's death ;  
Bane of every wicked spell ;  
Silencer of dragon's yell.  
Alas ! thou this wilt never do :  
Thou art an enchantress too,  
And wilt surely never spill  
Blood of those whose eyes can kill.



TO HOPE.

---

WHEN by my solitary hearth I sit,  
And hateful thoughts enwrap my soul in gloom ;  
When no fair dreams before my "mind's eye" flit,  
And the bare heath of life presents no bloom ;  
Sweet Hope ! ethereal balm upon me shed,  
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.

Whene'er I wander, at the fall of night,  
Where woven boughs shut out the moon's bright ray,  
Should sad Despondency my musings fright,  
And frown, to drive fair Cheerfulness away,  
Peep with the moonbeams through the leafy roof,  
And keep that fiend Despondence far aloof.

Should Disappointment, parent of Despair,  
Strive for her son to seize my careless heart  
When, like a cloud, he sits upon the air,  
Preparing on his spell-bound prey to dart :  
Chase him away, sweet Hope, with visage bright,  
And fright him, as the morning frightens night !

Whene'er the fate of those I hold most dear  
Tells to my fearful breast a tale of sorrow,  
O bright-eyed Hope, my morbid fancy cheer ;  
Let me awhile thy sweetest comforts borrow :



Thy heaven-born radiance around me shed,  
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head!

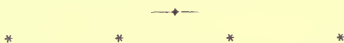
Should e'er unhappy love my bosom pain,  
From cruel parents, or relentless fair,  
O let me think it is not quite in vain  
To sigh out sonnets to the midnight air!  
Sweet Hope! ethereal balm upon me shed,  
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.

In the long vista of the years to roll,  
Let me not see our country's honour fade!  
O let me see our land retain her soul!  
Her pride, her freedom; and not freedom's shade.  
From thy bright eyes unusual brightness shed—  
Beneath thy pinions canopy my head!

Let me not see the patriot's high bequest,  
Great liberty! how great in plain attire!  
With the base purple of a court oppress'd,  
Bowing her head, and ready to expire:  
But let me see thee stoop from Heaven on wings  
That fill the skies with silver glitterings!

And as, in sparkling majesty, a star  
Gilds the bright summit of some gloomy cloud;  
Brightening the half-veil'd face of heaven afar:  
So, when dark thoughts my boding spirit shroud,  
Sweet Hope! celestial influence round me shed,  
Waving thy silver pinions o'er my head.

IMITATION OF SPENSER.



Now morning from her orient chamber came  
And her first footsteps touch'd a verdant hill :  
Crowning its lawny crest with amber flame,  
Silvering the untainted gushes of its rill ;  
Which, pure from mossy beds, did down distil,  
And after parting beds of simple flowers,  
By many streams a little lake did fill,  
Which round its marge reflected woven bowers,  
And, in its middle space, a sky that never lowers.

There the kingfisher saw his plumage bright,  
Vying with fish of brilliant dye below ;  
Whose silken fins' and golden scales' light  
Cast upward, through the waves, a ruby glow :  
There saw the swan his neck of arched snow,  
And oar'd himself along with majesty :  
Sparkled his jetty eyes ; his feet did show  
Beneath the waves like Afric's ebony,  
And on his back a fay reclined voluptuously.

Ah ! could I tell the wonders of an isle  
That in that fairest lake had placed been,  
I could e'en Dido of her grief beguile ;  
Or rob from aged Lear his bitter teen :

For sure so fair a place was never seen  
 Of all that ever charm'd romantic eye :  
 It seem'd an emerald in the silver sheen  
 Of the bright waters ; or as when on high,  
 Through clouds of fleecy white, laughs the cœrulean sky.

And all around it dipp'd luxuriously  
 Slopings of verdure through the glossy tide,  
 Which, as it were in gentle amity,  
 Rippled delighted up the flowery side ;  
 As if to glean the ruddy tears it tried,  
 Which fell profusely from the rose-tree stem !  
 Haply it was the workings of its pride,  
 In strife to throw upon the shore a gem  
 Outvying all the buds in Flora's diadem.

\* \* \* \*

WOMAN ! when I behold thee flippant, vain,  
 Inconstant, childish, proud, and full of fancies ;  
 Without that modest softening that enhances  
 The downcast eye, repentant of the pain  
 That its mild light creates to heal again ;  
 E'en then, elate, my spirit leaps and prances,  
 E'en then my soul with exultation dances  
 For that to love, so long, I've dormant lain :  
 But when I see thee meek, and kind, and tender,  
 Heavens ! how desperately do I adore  
 Thy winning graces ;—to be thy defender  
 I hotly burn—to be a Calidore—  
 A very Red Cross Knight—a stout Leander—  
 Might I be loved by thee like these of yore.

Light feet, dark violet eyes, and parted hair ;  
Soft dimpled hands, white neck, and creamy breast ;  
Are things on which the dazzled senses rest  
Till the fond, fixed eyes, forget they stare.  
From such fine pictures, Heavens ! I cannot dare  
To turn my admiration, though unpossess'd  
They be of what is worthy,—though not drest,  
In lovely modesty, and virtues rare.  
Yet these I leave as thoughtless as a lark ;  
These lures I straight forget,—e'en ere I dine,  
Or thrice my palate moisten : but when I mark  
Such charms with mild intelligences shine,  
My ear is open like a greedy shark,  
To catch the tunings of a voice divine.

Ah ! who can e'er forget so fair a being ?  
Who can forget her half-retiring sweets ?  
God ! she is like a milk-white lamb that bleats  
For man's protection. Surely the All-seeing,  
Who joys to see us with his gifts agreeing,  
Will never give him pinions, who intreats  
Such innocence to ruin,—who vilely cheats  
A dove-like bosom. In truth there is no freeing  
One's thoughts from such a beauty ; when I hear  
A lay that once I saw her hand awake,  
Her form seems floating palpable, and near :  
Had I e'er seen her from an arbour take  
A dewy flower, oft would that hand appear,  
And o'er my eyes the trembling moisture shake.



ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE.

---

MY heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains  
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains  
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk :  
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,  
But being too happy in thy happiness,—  
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,  
In some melodious plot  
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,  
Singingst of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage, that hath been  
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,  
Tasting of Flora and the country-green,  
Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth !  
O for a beaker full of the warm South,  
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,  
And purple-stained mouth ;  
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
And with thee fade away into the forest dim :

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget  
What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ;  
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,  
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;  
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
And leaden-eyed despairs ;  
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away ! away ! for I will fly to thee,  
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,  
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,  
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards :  
Already with thee ! tender is the night,  
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays ;  
But here there is no light,  
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown  
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
 But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet  
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild ;  
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine ;  
 Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves ;  
 And mid-May's eldest child,  
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen ; and for many a time  
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
 Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,  
 To take into the air my quiet breath ;  
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
 In such an ecstasy !  
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—  
 To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !  
 No hungry generations tread thee down ;  
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
 In ancient days by emperor and clown :  
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home,  
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;  
 The same that oft-times hath  
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam  
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell  
    To toll me back from thee to my sole self!  
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well  
    As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.  
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades  
    Past the near meadows, over the still stream,  
    Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep  
        In the next valley-glades:  
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
    Fled is that music:—do I wake or sleep?







ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness!  
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,  
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape  
Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?  
What men or gods are these? what maidens loath?  
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,  
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave  
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;

Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
 Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;  
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,  
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!



Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed  
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;  
 And, happy melodist, unwearied,  
 For ever piping songs for ever new;  
 More happy love! more happy, happy love!  
 For ever warm, and still to be enjoy'd,  
 For ever panting and for ever young;  
 All breathing human passion far above,  
 That leaves a heart high sorrowful and cloy'd,  
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?  
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,  
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?

What little town by river or sea-shore,  
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
 Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn ?  
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore  
 Will silent be ; and not a soul to tell  
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with brede  
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,  
 With forest branches and the trodden weed ;  
 Thou, silent form ! dost tease us out of thought  
 As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral !  
 When old age shall this generation waste,  
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,  
 " Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all  
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.





### ODE TO PSYCHE.

---

O GODDESS! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung  
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,  
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung,  
Even into thine own soft-conched ear :  
Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see  
The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?  
I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,  
And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,  
Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side  
In deepest grass, beneath the whispering roof  
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran  
A brooklet, scarce espied :  
'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers fragrant-eyed,  
Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,

They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass ;  
 Their arms embraced, and their pinions too ;  
 Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,  
 As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,  
 And ready still past kisses to outnumber  
 At tender eye-dawn of aurorean love :  
     The winged boy I knew ;  
 But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove ?  
     His Psyche true !

O latest-born and loveliest vision far  
 Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy !  
 Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,  
     Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky ;  
 Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,  
     Nor altar heap'd with flowers ;  
 Nor Virgin-choir to make delicious moan  
     Upon the midnight hours ;  
 No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet  
     From chain-swung censer teeming ;  
 No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat  
     Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.  
 O brightest ! though too late for antique vows,  
     Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,  
 When holy were the haunted forest boughs,  
     Holy the air, the water, and the fire ;  
 Yet even in these days so far retired  
     From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,  
     Fluttering among the faint Olympians,  
 I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.  
     So let me be thy choir, and make a moan  
     Upon the midnight hours !

Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet  
From swung censer teeming :  
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat  
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a faue  
In some untrodden region of my mind,  
Where branched thoughts, new-grown with pleasant pain,  
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind :  
Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees  
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep ;  
And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,  
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep ;  
And in the midst of this wide quietness  
A rosy sanctuary will I dress  
With the wreathed trellis of a working brain,  
With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,  
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,  
Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same :  
And there shall be for thee all soft delight  
That shadowy thought can win,  
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,  
To let the warm Love in !



## FANCY.

EVER let the Fancy roam,  
Pleasure never is at home :  
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,  
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth ;  
Then let winged Fancy wander  
Through the thought still spread beyond her :  
Open wide the mind's cage door,  
She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.  
O sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;  
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,  
And the enjoying of the Spring  
Fades as does its blossoming :  
Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,  
Blushing through the mist and dew,  
Cloys with tasting : What do thou ?  
Sit thee by the ingle, when  
The sear faggot blazes bright,  
Spirit of a winter's night ;  
When the soundless earth is muffled,  
And the caked snow is shuffled  
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon ;  
When the Night doth meet the Noon  
In a dark conspiracy  
To banish Even from her sky.

Sit thee there, and send abroad,  
With a mind self-overaw'd,  
Fancy, high-commission'd :—send her !  
She has vassals to attend her :  
She will bring, in spite of frost,  
Beauties that the earth hath lost ;  
She will bring thee, all together,  
All delights of summer weather ;  
All the buds and bells of May,  
From dewy sward or thorny spray ;  
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,  
With a still, mysterious stealth :  
She will mix these pleasures up  
Like three fit wines in a cup,  
And thou shalt quaff it :—thou shalt hear  
Distant harvest-carols clear ;  
Rustle of the reaped corn ;  
Sweet birds antheing the morn :  
And, in the same moment—hark !  
'Tis the early April lark,  
Or the rooks, with busy caw,  
Foraging for sticks and straw.  
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold  
The daisy and the marigold ;  
White-plumed lilies, and the first  
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst ;  
Shaded hyacinth, alway  
Sapphire queen of the mid-May ;  
And every leaf, and every flower  
Pearl'd with the self-same shower.  
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep  
Meagre from its celled sleep ;



And the snake all winter-thin  
Cast on sunny bank its skin ;  
Freckled nest eggs thou shalt see  
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,  
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest  
Quiet on her mossy nest ;  
Then the hurry and alarm  
When the bee-hive casts its swarm ;  
Acorns ripe down-pattering  
While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;  
Every thing is spoilt by use :  
Where's the cheek that doth not fade,  
Too much gazed at ? Where's the maid  
Whose lip mature is ever new ?  
Where's the eye, however blue,  
Doth not weary ? Where's the face  
One would meet in every place ?  
Where's the voice, however soft,  
One would hear so very oft ?  
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth  
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.  
Let, then, winged Fancy find  
Thee a mistress to thy mind :  
Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,  
Ere the God of Torment taught her  
How to frown and how to chide ;  
With a waist and with a side  
White as Hebe's, when her zone  
Slipt its golden clasp, and down  
Fell her kirtle to her feet.

While she held the goblet sweet,  
And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh  
Of the Fancy's silken leash ;  
Quickly break her prison-string,  
And such joys as these she'll bring.—  
Let the winged Fancy roam,  
Pleasure never is at home.



ODE.

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,  
Ye have left your souls on earth !  
Have ye souls in heaven too,  
Double-lived in regions new ?  
Yes, and those of heaven commune  
With the spheres of sun and moon ;  
With the noise of fountains wondrous,  
And the parle of voices thund'rous ;  
With the whisper of heaven's trees  
And one another, in soft ease  
Seated on Elysian lawns  
Browsed by none but Dian's fawns :  
Underneath large blue-bells tented,  
Where the daisies are rose-scented,  
And the rose herself has got  
Perfume which on earth is not ;  
Where the nightingale doth sing  
Not a senseless, tranced thing,  
But divine melodious truth ;  
Philosophic numbers smooth :  
Tales and golden histories  
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then  
On the earth ye live again ;  
And the souls ye left behind you  
Teach us, here, the way to find you,  
Where your other souls are joying,  
Never slumber'd, never cloying.  
Here, your earth-born souls still speak  
To mortals, of their little week ;  
Of their sorrows and delights ;  
Of their passions and their spites ;  
Of their glory and their shame ;  
What doth strengthen and what maim.  
Thus ye teach us, every day,  
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,  
Ye have left your souls on earth !  
Ye have souls in heaven too,  
Double-lived in regions new !





### TO AUTUMN.

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness !

Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run ;  
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,

And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;

To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells

With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,  
And still more, later flowers for the bees,

Until they think warm days will never cease,

For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?  
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;  
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,  
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
Spare the next swath and all its twined flowers ;  
And sometime like a gleaner thou dost keep  
Steady thy laden head across a brook ;  
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,  
Thou watchest the last oozyings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring ? Ay, where are they ?  
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,  
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,  
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;  
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
Among the river shallows, borne aloft  
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;  
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn ;  
Hedge-cricket sing ; and now with treble soft  
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,  
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.



ODE ON MELANCHOLY.

---

No, no ! go not to Lethe, neither twist  
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine ;  
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd  
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine ;  
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,  
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be  
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl  
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries ;  
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,  
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall  
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,  
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,  
And hides the green hill in an April shroud ;  
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,  
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,  
Or on the wealth of globed peonies ;  
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,  
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,  
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die ;  
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
Bidding adieu ; and aching Pleasure nigh,  
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips :  
Ay, in the very temple of Delight  
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,  
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue  
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine ;  
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,  
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.





LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN.

—+—  
SOULS of poets dead and gone,  
What Elysium have ye known,  
Happy field or mossy cavern,  
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern ?  
Have ye tippled drink more fine  
Than mine host's Canary wine ?  
Or are fruits of Paradise  
Sweeter than those dainty pies  
Of venison ? O generous food !  
Drest as though bold Robin Hood  
Would, with his maid Marian,  
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day  
Mine host's sign-board flew away,  
Nobody knew whither, till  
An astrologer's old quill  
To a sheepskin gave the story,—  
Said he saw you in your glory,  
Underneath a new old-sign  
Sipping beverage divine,

And pledging with contented smack  
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of poets dead and gone,  
What Elysium have ye known,  
Happy field or mossy cavern,  
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern ?



## ROBIN HOOD.

TO A FRIEND.



No! those days are gone away,  
And their hours are old and grey,  
And their minutes buried all  
Under the down-trodden pall  
Of the leaves of many years :  
Many times have Winter's shears,  
Frozen North, and chilling East,  
Sounded tempests to the feast  
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,  
Since men knew nor rent nor leases.

No, the bugle sounds no more,  
And the twanging bow no more ;  
Silent is the ivory shrill  
Past the heath and up the hill ;  
There is no mid-forest laugh,  
Where lone Echo gives the half  
To some wight, amazed to hear  
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June  
You may go, with sun or moon,

Or the seven stars to light you,  
 Or the polar ray to right you ;  
 But you never may behold  
 Little John, or Robin bold ;  
 Never one, of all the clan,  
 Thrumming on an empty ean,  
 Some old hunting ditty, while  
 He doth his green way beguile  
 To fair hostess Merriment,  
 Down beside the pasture Trent ;  
 For he left the merry tale,  
 Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din ;  
 Gone, the song of Gamelyn ;  
 Gone, the tough-belted outlaw  
 Idling in the "grené shawe ;"  
 All are gone away and past !  
 And if Robin should be cast  
 Sudden from his tufted grave,  
 And if Marian should have  
 Once again her forest days,  
 She would weep, and he would craze :  
 He would swear, for all his oaks,  
 Fall'n beneath the dock-yard strokes,  
 Have rotted on the briny seas ;  
 She would weep that her wild bees  
 Sang not to her—strange ! that honey  
 Can't be got without hard money !

So it is ; yet let us sing  
 Honour to the old bow-string !

Honour to the bugle-horn !  
Honour to the woods unshorn !  
Honour to the Lincoln green !  
Honour to the archer keen !  
Honour to tight Little John,  
And the horse he rode upon !  
Honour to bold Robin Hood,  
Sleeping in the underwood !  
Honour to Maid Marian,  
And to all the Sherwood clan !  
Though their days have hurried by,  
Let us two a burden try.





### SLEEP AND POETRY.



As I lay in my bed slepe full unmete  
Was unto me, but why that I ne might  
Rest I ne wist, for there n' as erthly wight  
(As I suppose) had more of hertis ese  
Than I, for I n' ad sicknesse nor disese.—CHAUCER.

WHAT is more gentle than a wind in summer ?  
What is more soothing than the pretty hummer  
That stays one moment in an open flower,  
And buzzes cheerily from bower to bower ?  
What is more tranquil than a musk-rose blowing  
In a green island, far from all men's knowing ?  
More healthful than the leafiness of dales ?  
More secret than a nest of nightingales ?  
More serene than Cordelia's countenance ?  
More full of visions than a high romance ?  
What, but thee, Sleep ? Soft closer of our eyes !  
Low murmurer of tender lullabies !  
Light hoverer around our happy pillows !

Wreather of poppy buds, and weeping willows!  
Silent entangler of a beauty's tresses!  
Most happy listener! when the morning blesses  
Thee for enlivening all the cheerful eyes  
That glance so brightly at the new sun-rise.

But what is higher beyond thought than thee?  
Fresher than berries of a mountain-tree?  
More strange, more beautiful, more smooth, more regal,  
Than wings of swans, than doves, than dim-seen eagle?  
What is it? And to what shall I compare it?  
It has a glory, and nought else can share it:  
The thought thereof is awful, sweet, and holy,  
Chasing away all worldliness and folly:  
Coming sometimes like fearful claps of thunder;  
Or the low rumblings earth's regions under;  
And sometimes like a gentle whispering  
Of all the secrets of some wondrous thing  
That breathes about us in the vacant air;  
So that we look around with prying stare,  
Perhaps to see shapes of light, aerial limning;  
And catch soft floatings from a faint-heard hymning;  
To see the laurel-wreath, on high suspended,  
That is to crown our name when life is ended.  
Sometimes it gives a glory to the voice,  
And from the heart up-springs, rejoice! rejoice!  
Sounds which will reach the Framer of all things,  
And die away in ardent mutterings.

No one who once the glorious sun has seen,  
And all the clouds, and felt his bosom clean  
For his great Maker's presence, but must know

What 'tis I mean, and feel his being glow :  
Therefore no insult will I give his spirit,  
By telling what he sees from native merit.

O Poesy ! for thee I hold my pen,  
That am not yet a glorious denizen  
Of thy wide heaven—should I rather kneel  
Upon some mountain-top until I feel  
A glowing splendour round about me hung,  
And echo back the voice of thine own tongue ?  
O Poesy ! for thee I grasp my pen,  
That am not yet a glorious denizen  
Of thy wide heaven ; yet, to my ardent prayer,  
Yield from thy sanctuary some clear air,  
Smooth'd for intoxication by the breath  
Of flowering bays, that I may die a death  
Of luxury, and my young spirit follow  
The morning sunbeams to the great Apollo,  
Like a fresh sacrifice ; or, if I can bear  
The o'erwhelming sweets, 'twill bring me to the fair  
Visions of all places : a bowery nook  
Will be elysium—an eternal book  
Whence I may copy many a lovely saying  
About the leaves, and flowers—about the playing  
Of nymphs in woods, and fountains ; and the shade  
Keeping a silence round a sleeping maid ;  
And many a verse from so strange influence  
That we must ever wonder how, and whence  
It came. Also imaginings will hover  
Round my fire-side, and haply there discover  
Vistas of solemn beauty, where I'd wander  
In happy silence, like the clear Meander



Through its lone vales ; and where I found a spot  
Of awfuller shade, or an enchanted grot,  
Or a green hill o'erspread with chequer'd dress  
Of flowers, and fearful from its loveliness,  
Write on my tablets all that was permitted,  
All that was for our human senses fitted.  
Then the events of this wide world I'd seize  
Like a strong giant, and my spirit tease  
Till at its shoulders it should proudly see  
Wings to find out an immortality.

Stop and consider ! life is but a day ;  
A fragile dewdrop on its perilous way  
From a tree's summit ; a poor Indian's sleep  
While his boat hastens to the monstrous steep  
Of Montmorenci. Why so sad a moan ?  
Life is the rose's hope while yet unblown ;  
The reading of an ever-changing tale ;  
The light uplifting of a maiden's veil ;  
A pigeon tumbling in clear summer air ;  
A laughing school-boy, without grief or care,  
Riding the springy branches of an elm.

O for ten years, that I may overwhelm  
Myself in poesy ! so I may do the deed  
That my own soul has to itself decreed.  
Then I will pass the countries that I see  
In long perspective, and continually  
Taste their pure fountains. First the realm I'll pass  
Of Flora, and Old Pan : sleep in the grass,  
Feed upon apples red, and strawberries,  
And choose each pleasure that my fancy sees,

Catch the white-handed nymphs in shady places,  
To woo sweet kisses from averted faces,—  
Play with their fingers, touch their shoulders white  
Into a pretty shrinking with a bite  
As hard as lips can make it: till agreed,  
A lovely tale of human life we'll read.  
And one will teach a tame dove how it best  
May fan the cool air gently o'er my rest :  
Another, bending o'er her nimble tread,  
Will set a green robe floating round her head,  
And still will dance with ever-varied ease,  
Smiling upon the flowers and the trees :  
Another will entice me on, and on,  
Through almond blossoms and rich cinnamon ;  
Till in the bosom of a leafy world  
We rest in silence, like two gems upcurl'd  
In the recesses of a pearly shell.

And can I ever bid these joys farewell ?  
Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,  
Where I may find the agonies, the strife  
Of human hearts : for lo ! I see afar,  
O'er-sailing the blue cragginess, a car  
And steeds with streamy manes—the charioteer  
Looks out upon the winds with glorious fear :  
And now the numerous tramplings quiver lightly  
Along a huge cloud's ridge ; and now with sprightly  
Wheel downward come they into fresher skies,  
Tipt round with silver from the sun's bright eyes.  
Still downward with capacious whirl they glide ;  
And now I see them on a green-hill side  
In breezy rest among the nodding stalks.

The charioteer with wondrous gesture talks  
To the trees and mountains; and there soon appear  
Shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear,  
Passing along before a dusky space  
Made by some mighty oaks: as they would chase  
Some ever-fleeting music, on they sweep.  
Lo! how they murmur, laugh, and smile, and weep:  
Some with upholden hand and mouth severe;  
Some with their faces muffled to the ear  
Between their arms; some clear in youthful bloom,  
Go glad and smilingly athwart the gloom;  
Some looking back, and some with upward gaze;  
Yes, thousands in a thousand different ways  
Flit onward—now a lovely wreath of girls  
Dancing their sleek hair into tangled curls;  
And now broad wings. Most awfully intent  
The driver of those steeds is forward bent,  
And seems to listen: O that I might know  
All that he writes with such a hurrying glow!

The visions all are fled—the car is fled  
Into the light of heaven, and in their stead  
A sense of real things comes doubly strong,  
And, like a muddy stream, would bear along  
My soul to nothingness: but I will strive  
Against all doubtings, and will keep alive  
The thought of that same chariot, and the strange  
Journey it went.

Is there so small a range  
In the present strength of manhood, that the high  
Imagination cannot freely fly

As she was wont of old ? prepare her steeds,  
 Paw up against the light, and do strange deeds  
 Upon the clouds ? Has she not shown us all ?  
 From the clear space of ether, to the small  
 Breath of new buds unfolding ? From the meaning  
 Of Jove's large eyebrow, to the tender greening  
 Of April meadows ? here her altar shone,  
 E'en in this isle ; and who could paragon  
 The fervid choir that lifted up a noise  
 Of harmony, to where it aye will poise  
 Its mighty self of convoluting sound,  
 Huge as a planet, and like that roll round,  
 Eternally around a dizzy void ?  
 Ay, in those days the Muses were nigh cloy'd  
 With honours ; nor had any other care  
 Than to sing out and soothe their wavy hair.

Could all this be forgotten ? Yes, a schism  
 Nurtured by foppery and barbarism,  
 Made great Apollo blush for this his land.  
 Men were thought wise who could not understand  
 His glories : with a puling infant's force  
 They sway'd about upon a rocking-horse,  
 And thought it Pegasus. Ah, dismal-soul'd !  
 The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd  
 Its gathering waves—ye felt it not. The blue  
 Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew  
 Of summer night collected still to make  
 The morning precious : Beauty was awake !  
 Why were ye not awake ? But ye were dead  
 To things ye knew not of,—were closely wed  
 To musty laws lined out with wretched rule

And compass vile : so that ye taught a school  
 Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,  
 Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,  
 Their verses tallied. Easy was the task :  
 A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask  
 Of Poesy. Ill-fated, impious race !  
 That blasphemed the bright Lyrist to his face,  
 And did not know it,—no. they went about,  
 Holding a poor, decrepit standard out.  
 Mark'd with most flimsy mottoes, and in large  
 The name of one Boileau !

O ye whose charge

It is to hover round our pleasant hills !  
 Whose congregated majesty so fills  
 My boundly reverence, that I cannot trace  
 Your hallow'd names, in this unholy place.  
 So near those common folk ; did not their shames  
 Affright you ? Did our old lamenting Thames  
 Delight you ? did ye never cluster round  
 Delicious Avon, with a mournful sound,  
 And weep ? Or did ye wholly bid adieu  
 To regions where no more the laurel grew ?  
 Or did ye stay to give a welcoming  
 To some lone spirits who could proudly sing  
 Their youth away, and die ? 'Twas even so :  
 But let me think away those times of woe :  
 Now 'tis a fairer season ; ye have breathed  
 Rich benedictions o'er us : ye have wreathed  
 Fresh garlands : for sweet music has been heard  
 In many places ; some has been upstirr'd  
 From out its crystal dwelling in a lake,

By a swan's ebon bill ; from a thick brake,  
 Nested and quiet in a valley mild,  
 Bubbles a pipe ; fine sounds are floating wild  
 About the earth : happy are ye and glad.  
 These things are, doubtless : yet in truth we've had  
 Strange thunders from the potency of song ;  
 Mingled indeed with what is sweet and strong,  
 From majesty : but in clear truth the themes  
 Are ugly cubs, the Poets' Polyphemes  
 Disturbing the grand sea. A drainless shower  
 Of light is poesy ; 'tis the supreme of power ;  
 'Tis might half slumbering on its own right arm.  
 The very archings of her eyelids charm  
 A thousand willing agents to obey,  
 And still she governs with the mildest sway :  
 But strength alone though of the Muses born  
 Is like a fallen angel : trees uptorn,  
 Darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres  
 Delight it ; for it feeds upon the burrs  
 And thorns of life ; forgetting the great end  
 Of poesy, that it should be a friend  
 To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts of man.

Yet I rejoice : a myrtle fairer than  
 E'er grew in Paphos, from the bitter weeds  
 Lifts its sweet heap into the air, and feeds  
 A silent space with ever-sprouting green.  
 All tenderest birds there find a pleasant screen,  
 Creep through the shade with jaunty fluttering,  
 Nibble the little cupped flowers and sing.  
 Then let us clear away the choking thorns  
 From round its gentle stem ; let the young fawns

Yeaned in after-times, when we are flown,  
 Find a fresh sward beneath it, overgrown  
 With simple flowers : let there nothing be  
 More boisterous than a lover's bended knee ;  
 Nought more ungentle than the placid look  
 Of one who leans upon a closed book ;  
 Nought more untranquil than the grassy slopes  
 Between two hills. All hail, delightful hopes !  
 As she was wont, th' imagination  
 Into most lovely labyrinths will be gone,  
 And they shall be accounted poet kings  
 Who simply tell the most heart-easing things.  
 O may these joys be ripe before I die !

Will not some say that I presumptuously  
 Have spoken ? that from hastening disgrace  
 'Twere better far to hide my foolish face ?  
 That whining boyhood should with reverence bow  
 Ere the dread thunderbolt could reach me ? How !  
 If I do hide myself, it sure shall be  
 In the very fane, the light of Poesy :  
 If I do fall, at least I will be laid  
 Beneath the silence of a poplar shade ;  
 And over me the grass shall be smooth shaven ;  
 And there shall be a kind memorial graven.  
 But off, Despondence ! miserable bane !  
 They should not know thee, who athirst to gain  
 A noble end, are thirsty every hour.  
 What though I am not wealthy in the dower  
 Of spanning wisdom ; though I do not know  
 The shiftings of the mighty winds that blow  
 Hither and thither all the changing thoughts

Of man : though no great ministering reason sorts  
Out the dark mysteries of human souls  
To clear conceiving : yet there ever rolls  
A vast idea before me, and I glean  
Therefrom my liberty ; thence too I've seen  
The end and aim of Poesy. 'Tis clear  
As anything most true ; as that the year  
Is made of the four seasons—manifest  
As a large cross, some old cathedral's crest,  
Lifted to the white clouds. Therefore should I  
Be but the essence of deformity,  
A coward, did my very eyelids wink  
At speaking out what I have dared to think.  
Ah ! rather let me like a madman run  
Over some precipice ; let the hot sun  
Melt my Dedalian wings, and drive me down  
Convulsed and headlong ? Stay ! an inward frown  
Of conscience bids me be more calm awhile.  
An ocean dim, sprinkled with many an isle,  
Spreads awfully before me. How much toil !  
How many days ! what desperate turmoil !  
Ere I can have explored its widenesses.  
Ah, what a task ! upon my bended knees,  
I could unsay those—no, impossible !  
Impossible !

For sweet relief I'll dwell  
On humbler thoughts, and let this strange assay  
Begun in gentleness die so away.  
E'en now all tumult from my bosom fades :  
I turn full-hearted to the friendly aids  
That smooth the path of honour ; brotherhood,



And friendliness, the nurse of mutual good.  
The hearty grasp that sends a pleasant sonnet  
Into the brain ere one can think upon it ;  
The silence when some rhymes are coming out ;  
And when they're come, the very pleasant rout :  
The message certain to be done to-morrow.  
'Tis perhaps as well that it should be to borrow  
Some precious book from out its snug retreat,  
To cluster round it when we next shall meet.  
Scarce can I scribble on ; for lovely airs  
Are fluttering round the room like doves in pairs ;  
Many delights of that glad day recalling.  
When first my senses caught their tender falling.  
And with these airs come forms of elegance



Stooping their shoulders o'er a horse's prance,  
Careless, and grand—fingers soft and round  
Parting luxuriant curls ; and the swift bound  
Of Bacchus from his chariot, when his eye  
Made Ariadne's cheek look blushing.  
Thus I remember all the pleasant flow  
Of words at opening a portfolio.

Things such as these are ever harbingers  
To trains of peaceful images : the stirr  
Of a swan's neck unseen among the rushes :  
A linnet starting all about the bushes :  
A butterfly, with golden wings broad-parted,  
Nestling a rose, convulsed as though it smarted  
With over-pleasure—many, many more,  
Might I indulge at large in all my store  
Of luxuries : yet I must not forget  
Sleep, quiet with his poppy coronet :  
For what there may be worthy in these rhymes  
I partly owe to him : and thus, the chimes  
Of friendly voices had just given place  
To as sweet a silence, when I 'gan retrace  
The pleasant day, upon a couch at ease.  
It was a poet's house who keeps the keys  
Of pleasure's temple—round about were hung  
The glorious features of the bards who sung  
In other ages—cold and sacred busts  
Smiled at each other. Happy he who trusts  
To clear Futurity his darling fame !  
Then there were fauns and satyrs taking aim  
At swelling apples with a frisky leap  
And reaching fingers, 'mid a luscious heap

Of vine-leaves. Then there rose to view a fane  
 Of liney marble, and thereto a train  
 Of nymphs approaching fairly o'er the sward :  
 One, loveliest, holding her white hand toward  
 The dazzling sun-rise : two sisters sweet  
 Bending their graceful figures till they meet  
 Over the trippings of a little child :  
 And some are hearing, eagerly, the wild  
 Thrilling liquidity of dewy piping.  
 See, in another picture, nymphs are wiping  
 Cherishingly Diana's timorous limbs ;  
 A fold of lawny mantle dabbling swims  
 At the bath's edge, and keeps a gentle motion  
 With the subsiding crystal : as when ocean  
 Heaves calmly its broad swelling smoothness o'er  
 Its rocky marge, and balances once more  
 The patient weeds ; that now unshent by foam  
 Feel all about their undulating home.  
 Sappho's meek head was there half smiling down  
 At nothing ; just as though the earnest frown  
 Of over-thinking had that moment gone  
 From off her brow, and left her all alone.

Great Alfred's too, with anxious, pitying eyes,  
 As if he always listen'd to the sighs  
 Of the goaded world ; and Kosciusko's, worn  
 By horrid suffrance—mightily forlorn.

Petrarch, outstepping from the shady green,  
 Starts at the sight of Laura ; nor can wean  
 His eyes from her sweet face. Most happy they !  
 For over them was seen a free display

Of outspread wings, and from between them shone  
The face of Poesy : from off her throne  
She overlook'd things that I scarce could tell,  
The very sense of where I was might well  
Keep sleep aloof : but more than that there came  
Thought after thought to nourish up the flame  
Within my breast ; so that the morning light  
Surprised me even from a sleepless night ;  
And up I rose refresh'd, and glad, and gay,  
Resolving to begin that very day  
These lines ; and howsoever they be done,  
I leave them as a father does his son.





STANZAS.

---

IN a drear-nighted December,  
Too happy, happy tree,  
Thy branches ne'er remember  
Their green felicity :  
The north cannot undo them,  
With a sleety whistle through them :  
Nor frozen thawings glue them  
From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December,  
Too happy, happy brook,  
Thy bubblings ne'er remember  
Apollo's summer look ;  
But with a sweet forgetting,  
They stay their crystal fretting,  
Never, never petting  
About the frozen time.

Ah! would 'twere so with many  
A gentle girl and boy!  
But were there ever any  
Writhed not at passed joy?  
To know the change and feel it,  
When there is none to heal it,  
Nor numbed sense to steal it,  
Was never said in rhyme.



## EPISTLES.



Among the rest a shepherd (though but young  
Yet hartned to his pipe) with all the skill  
His few yeeres could, began to fill his quill.

*Britannia's Pastorals.*—BROWNE.

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TO GEORGE FELTON MATHEW.

SWEET are the pleasures that to verse belong,  
And doubly sweet a brotherhood in song ;  
Nor can remembrance, Mathew ! bring to view  
A fate more pleasing, a delight more true  
Than that in which the brother poets joy'd,  
Who, with combined powers, their wit employ'd  
To raise a trophy to the drama's muses.  
The thought of this great partnership diffuses  
Over the genius-loving heart, a feeling  
Of all that's high, and great, and good, and healing.  
Too partial friend ! fain would I follow thee  
Past each horizon of fine poesy ;

Fain would I echo back each pleasant note  
 As o'er Sicilian seas, clear anthems float  
 'Mong the light skimming gondolas far parted,  
 Just when the sun his farewell beam has darted :  
 But 'tis impossible ; far different cares  
 Beckon me sternly from soft " Lydian airs,"  
 And hold my faculties so long in thrall,  
 That I am oft in doubt whether at all  
 I shall again see Phœbus in the morning :  
 Or flush'd Aurora in the roseate dawning !  
 Or a white Naiad in a rippling stream ;  
 Or a rapt seraph in a moonlight beam ;  
 Or again witness what with thee I've seen,  
 The dew by fairy feet swept from the green,  
 After a night of some quaint jubilee  
 Which every elf and fay had come to see :  
 When bright processions took their airy march  
 Beneath the curved moon's triumphal arch.

But might I now each passing moment give  
 To the coy Muse, with me she would not live  
 In this dark city, nor would condescend  
 'Mid contradictions her delights to lend.  
 Should e'er the fine-eyed maid to me be kind,  
 Ah ! surely it must be whene'er I find  
 Some flowery spot, sequester'd, wild, romantic,  
 That often must have seen a poet frantic ;  
 Where oaks, that erst the Druid knew, are growing,  
 And flowers, the glory of one day, are blowing ;  
 Where the dark-leaved laburnum's drooping clusters  
 Reflect athwart the stream their yellow lustres,  
 And intertwined the cassia's arms unite,



With its own drooping buds, but very white.  
 Where on one side are covert branches hung,  
 'Mong which the nightingales have always sung  
 In leafy quiet; where to pry, aloof  
 Atween the pillars of the sylvan roof,  
 Would be to find where violet beds were nestling,  
 And where the bee with cowslip bells was wrestling.  
 There must be too a ruin dark and gloomy,  
 To say "Joy not too much in all that's bloomy."

Yet this is vain—O Mathew! lend thy aid  
 To find a place where I may greet the maid—  
 Where we may soft humanity put on,  
 And sit, and rhyme, and think on Chatterton;  
 And that warm-hearted Shakspeare sent to meet him  
 Four laurell'd spirits, heavenward to entreat him.  
 With reverence would we speak of all the sages  
 Who have left streaks of light athwart their ages:  
 And thou shouldst moralise on Milton's blindness,  
 And mourn the fearful dearth of human kindness  
 To those who strove with the bright golden wing  
 Of genius, to flap away each sting  
 Thrown by the pitiless world. We next could tell  
 Of those who in the cause of freedom fell;  
 Of our own Alfred, of Helvetian Tell;  
 Of him whose name to every heart's a solace,  
 High-minded and unbending William Wallace.  
 While to the rugged north our musing turns,  
 We well might drop a tear for him and Burns.  
 Felton! without incitements such as these,  
 How vain for me the niggard Muse to tease!  
 For thee, she will thy every dwelling grace,

And make "a sunshine in a shady place :"  
For thou wast once a flow'ret blooming wild,  
Close to the source, bright, pure, and undefiled,  
Whence gush the streams of song : in happy hour  
Came chaste Diana from her shady bower,  
Just as the sun was from the east uprising ;  
And, as for him some gift she was devising,  
Beheld thee, pluck'd thee, cast thee in the stream  
To meet her glorious brother's greeting beam.  
I marvel much that thou hast never told  
How, from a flower, into a fish of gold  
Apollo changed thee : how thou next didst seem  
A black-eyed swan upon the widening stream ;  
And when thou first didst in that mirror trace  
The placid features of a human face ;  
That thou hast never told thy travels strange,  
And all the wonders of the mazy range  
O'er pebbly crystal, and o'er golden sands ;  
Kissing thy daily food from Naiads' pearly hands.

*November, 1815.*



## TO MY BROTHER GEORGE.

FULL many a dreary hour have I past,  
My brain bewilder'd, and my mind o'ercast  
With heaviness; in seasons when I've thought  
No sphery strains by me could e'er be caught  
From the blue dome, though I to dimness gaze  
On the far depth where sheeted lightning plays;  
Or, on the wavy grass outstretch'd supinely,  
Pry 'mong the stars, to strive to think divinely:  
That I should never hear Apollo's song,  
Though feathery clouds were floating all along  
The purple west, and, two bright streaks between,  
The golden lyre itself were dimly seen:  
That the still murmur of the honey-bee  
Would never teach a rural song to me:  
That the bright glance from beauty's eyelids slanting  
Would never make a lay of mine enchanting,  
Or warm my breast with ardour to unfold  
Some tale of love and arms in time of old.

But there are times, when those that love the bay,  
Fly from all sorrowing far, far away;  
A sudden glow comes on them, nought they see  
In water, earth, or air, but poesy.

It has been said, dear George, and true I hold it,  
(For knightly Spenser to Libertas told it,)  
That when a Poet is in such a trance,  
In air he sees white coursers paw and prance,  
Bestriden of gay knights, in gay apparel,  
Who at each other tilt in playful quarrel ;  
And what we, ignorantly, sheet-lightning call,  
Is the swift opening of their wide portal,  
When the bright warder blows his trumpet clear,  
Whose tones reach nought on earth but poet's ear,  
When these enchanted portals open wide,  
And through the light the horsemen swiftly glide,  
The Poet's eye can reach those golden halls,  
And view the glory of their festivals :  
Their ladies fair, that in the distance seem  
Fit for the silvering of a seraph's dream ;  
Their rich brimm'd goblets, that incessant run,  
Like the bright spots that move about the sun ;  
And when upheld, the wine from each bright jar  
Pours with the lustre of a falling star.  
Yet further off are dimly seen their bowers,  
Of which no mortal eye can reach the flowers ;  
And 'tis right just, for well Apollo knows  
'Twould make the Poet quarrel with the rose.  
All that's reveal'd from that far seat of blisses,  
Is, the clear fountains' interchanging kisses,  
As gracefully descending, light and thin,  
Like silver streaks across a dolphin's fin,  
When he upswimmeth from the coral caves,  
And sports with half his tail above the waves.

These wonders strange he sees, and many more,

Whose head is pregnant with poetic lore :  
 Should he upon an evening ramble fare  
 With forehead to the soothing breezes bare,  
 Would he nought see but the dark, silent blue,  
 With all its diamonds trembling through and through ?  
 Or the coy moon, when in the waviness  
 Of whitest clouds she does her beauty dress,  
 And staidly paces higher up, and higher,  
 Like a sweet nun in holiday attire ?  
 Ah, yes ! much more would start into his sight—  
 The revelries and mysteries of night :  
 And should I ever see them, I will tell you  
 Such tales as needs must with amazement spell you.

These are the living pleasures of the bard :  
 But richer far posterity's award.  
 What does he murmur with his latest breath,  
 While his proud eye looks through the film of death ?  
 " What though I leave this dull and earthly mould,  
 Yet shall my spirit lofty converse hold  
 With after times.—The patriot shall feel  
 My stern alarum, and unsheath his steel ;  
 Or in the senate thunder out my numbers,  
 To startle princes from their easy slumbers.  
 The sage will mingle with each moral theme  
 My happy thoughts sententious : he will teem  
 With lofty periods when my verses fire him,  
 And then I'll stoop from heaven to inspire him.  
 Lays have I left of such a dear delight  
 That maids will sing them on their bridal-night.  
 Gay villagers, upon a morn of May,  
 When they have tired their gentle limbs with play,

And form'd a snowy circle on the grass,  
 And placed in midst of all that lovely lass  
 Who chosen is their queen,—with her fine head  
 Crowned with flowers purple, white, and red :  
 For there the lily and the musk-rose sighing,  
 Are emblems true of hapless lovers dying :



Between her breasts, that never yet felt trouble,  
 A bunch of violets full blown, and double,  
 Serenely sleep :—she from a casket takes  
 A little book,—and then a joy awakes  
 About each youthful heart,—with stifled cries,  
 And rubbing of white hands, and sparkling eyes :  
 For she's to read a tale of hopes and fears ;  
 One that I foster'd in my youthful years :

The pearls, that on each glistening circlet sleep,  
Gush ever and anon with silent creep,  
Lured by the innocent dimples. To sweet rest  
Shall the dear babe, upon its mother's breast,  
Be lull'd with songs of mine. Fair world, adieu!  
Thy dales and hills are fading from my view :  
Swiftly I mount, upon wide-spreading pinions,  
Far from the narrow bounds of thy dominions.  
Full joy I feel, while thus I cleave the air,  
That my soft verse will charm thy daughters fair,  
And warm thy sons!" Ah, my dear friend and brother,  
Could I, at once, my mad ambition smother,  
For tasting joys like these, sure I should be  
Happier, and dearer to society.

At times, 'tis true, I've felt relief from pain  
When some bright thought has darted through my brain :  
Through all that day I've felt a greater pleasure  
Than if I had brought to light a hidden treasure.  
As to my sonnets, though none else should heed them,  
I feel delighted, still, that you should read them.  
Of late, too, I have had much calm enjoyment,  
Stretch'd on the grass at my best loved employment  
Of scribbling lines for you. These things I thought  
While, in my face, the freshest breeze I caught.  
E'en now I am pillow'd on a bed of flowers  
That crowns a lofty cliff, which proudly towers  
Above the ocean waves. The stalks and blades  
Chequer my tablet with their quivering shades.  
On one side is a field of drooping oats,  
Through which the poppies show their scarlet coats,  
So pert and useless, that they bring to mind  
The scarlet coats that pester human-kind.

And on the other side, outspread, is seen  
Ocean's blue mantle, streak'd with purple and green ;  
Now 'tis I see a canvass'd ship, and now  
Mark the bright silver curling round her prow.  
I see the lark down-dropping to his nest,  
And the broad-wing'd sea-gull never at rest ;  
For when no more he spreads his feathers free,  
His breast is dancing on the restless sea.  
Now I direct my eyes into the west,  
Which at this moment is in sun-beams drest :  
Why westward turn ? 'Twas but to say adieu !  
'Twas but to kiss my hand, dear George, to you !

*August, 1816.*





## TO CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.

—♦—

OFT have you seen a swan superbly frowning,  
And with proud breast his own white shadow crowning ;  
He slants his neck beneath the waters bright  
So silently, it seems a beam of light  
Come from the galaxy : anon he sports,—  
With outspread wings the Naiad Zephyr courts,  
Or ruffles all the surface of the lake  
In striving from its crystal face to take  
Some diamond water-drops, and them to treasure  
In milky nest, and sip them off at leisure.  
But not a moment can he there ensure them,  
Nor to such downy rest can he allure them ;  
For down they rush as though they would be free,  
And drop like hours into eternity.  
Just like that bird am I in loss of time,  
Whene'er I venture on the stream of rhyme ;  
With shatter'd boat, oar snapt, and canvas rent,  
I slowly sail, scarce knowing my intent ;  
Still scooping up the water with my fingers,  
In which a trembling diamond never lingers.

By this, friend Charles, you may full plainly see  
Why I have never penn'd a line to thee :

Because my thoughts were never free and clear,  
 And little fit to please a classic ear ;  
 Because my wine was of too poor a savour  
 For one whose palate gladdens in the flavour  
 Of sparkling Helicon :—small good it were  
 To take him to a desert rude and bare,  
 Who had on Baiæ's shore reclined at ease,  
 While Tasso's page was floating in a breeze  
 That gave soft music from Armida's bowers,  
 Mingled with fragrance from her rarest flowers :  
 Small good to one who had by Mulla's stream  
 Fondled the maidens with the breasts of cream ;  
 Who had beheld Belphœbe in a brook,  
 And lovely Una in a leafy nook,  
 And Archimago leaning o'er his book :  
 Who had of all that's sweet tasted, and seen,  
 From silvery ripple, up to beauty's queen ;  
 From the sequester'd haunts of gay Titania,  
 To the blue dwelling of divine Urania :  
 One, who of late had ta'en sweet forest walks  
 With him who elegantly chats and talks—  
 The wrong'd Libertas—who has told you stories  
 Of laurel chaplets, and Apollo's glories ;  
 Of troops chivalrous prancing through a city,  
 And tearful ladies, made for love and pity :  
 With many else which I have never known.  
 Thus have I thought ; and days on days have flown  
 Slowly, or rapidly—unwilling still  
 For you to try my dull, unlearned quill.  
 Nor should I now, but that I've known you long ;  
 That you first taught me all the sweets of song :  
 The grand, the sweet, the terse, the free, the fine :

What swell'd with pathos, and what right divine :  
Spenserian vowels that elope with ease,  
And float along like birds o'er summer seas :  
Miltonian storms, and more, Miltonian tenderness :  
Michael in arms, and more, meek Eve's fair slenderness.  
Who read for me the sonnet swelling loudly  
Up to its climax, and then dying proudly ?  
Who found for me the grandeur of the ode,  
Growing, like Atlas, stronger from its load ?  
Who let me taste that more than cordial dram,  
The sharp, the rapier-pointed epigram ?  
Show'd me that epic was of all the king,  
Round, vast, and spanning all, like Saturn's ring ?  
You too up-held the veil from Clio's beauty,  
And pointed out the patriot's stern duty ;  
The might of Alfred, and the shaft of Tell ;  
The hand of Brutus, that so grandly fell  
Upon a tyrant's head. Ah ! had I never seen,  
Or known your kindness, what might I have been ?  
What my enjoyments in my youthful years,  
Bereft of all that now my life endears ?  
And can I e'er these benefits forget ?  
And can I e'er repay the friendly debt ?  
No, doubly no ;—yet should these rhymings please,  
I shall roll on the grass with two-fold ease ;  
For I have long time been my fancy feeding  
With hopes that you would one day think the reading  
Of my rough verses not an hour mispent ;  
Should it e'er be so, what a rich content !  
Some weeks have pass'd since last I saw the spires  
In lucent Thames reflected :—warm desires  
To see the sun o'er-peep the eastern dimness,

And morning-shadows streaking into slimness  
Across the lawn fields, and pebbly water ;  
To mark the time as they grow broad and shorter ;  
To feel the air that plays about the hills,  
And sips its freshness from the little rills ;  
To see high, golden corn wave in the light  
When Cynthia smiles upon a summer's night,  
And peers among the cloudlets, jet and white,  
As though she were reclining in a bed  
Of bean-blossoms, in heaven freshly shed.  
No sooner had I stepp'd into these pleasures,  
Than I began to think of rhymes and measures ;  
The air that floated by me seem'd to say  
" Write ! thou wilt never have a better day."  
And so I did. When many lines I'd written,  
Though with their grace I was not oversmitten,  
Yet, as my hand was warm, I thought I'd better  
Trust to my feelings, and write you a letter.  
Such an attempt required an inspiration  
Of a peculiar sort,—a consummation ;—  
Which, had I felt, these scribblings might have been  
Verses from which the soul would never ween ;  
But many days have past since last my heart  
Was warm'd luxuriously by divine Mozart ;  
By Arne delighted, or by Handel madden'd ;  
Or by the song of Erin pierced and sadden'd :  
What time you were before the music sitting,  
And the rich notes to each sensation fitting.  
Since I have walk'd with you through shady lanes  
That freshly terminate in open plains,  
And revell'd in a chat that ceased not,  
When, at night-fall, among your books we got :

No, nor when supper came, nor after that,—  
Nor when reluctantly I took my hat ;  
No, nor till cordially you shook my hand  
Mid-way between our homes :—your accents bland  
Still sounded in my ears, when I no more  
Could hear your footsteps touch the gravelly floor.  
Sometimes I lost them, and then found again ;  
You changed the foot-path for the grassy plain.  
In those still moments I have wish'd you joys  
That well you know to honour :—" Life's very toys  
With him," said I, " will take a pleasant charm ;  
It cannot be that aught will work him harm."  
These thoughts now come o'er me with all their might :—  
Again I shake your hand,—friend Charles, good night.

*September, 1816.*





## SONNETS.

I.

TO A FRIEND WHO SENT ME SOME ROSES.

As late I rambled in the happy fields,  
What time the skylark shakes the tremulous dew  
From his lush clover covert ;—when anew  
Adventurous knights take up their dinted shields ;  
I saw the sweetest flower wild nature yields,  
A fresh-blown musk-rose ; 'twas the first that threw  
Its sweets upon the summer : graceful it grew  
As is the wand that queen Titania wields.  
And, as I feasted on its fragrancy,  
I thought the garden-rose it far excell'd ;  
But when, O Wells ! thy roses came to me,  
My sense with their deliciousness was spell'd :  
Soft voices had they, that with tender plea  
Whisper'd of peace, and truth, and friendliness unquell'd.

## II.

## TO MY BROTHER GEORGE.

MANY the wonders I this day have seen :

The sun, when first he kist away the tears

That fill'd the eyes of Morn ;—the laurel'd peers

Who from the feathery gold of evening lean ;—

The Ocean with its vastness, its blue green,

Its ships, its rocks, its caves, its hopes, its fears,—

Its voice mysterious, which whoso hears

Must think on what will be, and what has been.

E'en now, dear George, while this for you I write,

Cynthia is from her silken curtains peeping

So scantily, that it seems her bridal night,

And she her half-discover'd revels keeping.

But what, without the social thought of thee,

Would be the wonders of the sky and sea ?

## III.

## TO ———.

HAD I a man's fair form, then might my sighs

Be echoed swiftly through that ivory shell

Thine ear, and find thy gentle heart ; so well

Would passion arm me for the enterprise :

But ah ! I am no knight whose foeman dies ;

No cuirass glistens on my bosom's swell ;

I am no happy shepherd of the dell

Whose lips have trembled with a maiden's eyes.

Yet must I doat upon thee,—call thee sweet,

Sweeter by far than Hybla's honey'd roses

When steep'd in dew rich to intoxication.  
 Ah! I will taste that dew, for me 'tis meet,  
 And when the moon her pallid face discloses,  
 I'll gather some by spells, and incantation.

## iv.

O SOLITUDE! if I must with thee dwell,  
 Let it not be among the jumbled heap  
 Of murky buildings: climb with me the steep,—  
 Nature's observatory—whence the dell,  
 In flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,  
 May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep  
 'Mongst boughs pavilion'd, where the deer's swift leap  
 Startles the wild bee from the foxglove bell.  
 But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,  
 Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,  
 Whose words are images of thoughts refined,  
 Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be  
 Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,  
 When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

## v.

How many bards gild the lapses of time!  
 A few of them have ever been the food  
 Of my delighted fancy,—I could brood  
 Over their beauties, earthly, or sublime:  
 And often, when I sit me down to rhyme,  
 These will in throngs before my mind intrude:  
 But no confusion, no disturbance rude  
 Do they occasion; 'tis a pleasing chime.



So the unnumber'd sounds that evening store ;  
 The songs of birds—the whispering of the leaves—  
 The voice of waters—the great bell that heaves  
 With solemn sound,—and thousand others more,  
 That distance of recognizance bereaves,  
 Make pleasing music, and not wild uproar.

## VI.

TO G. A. W.

NYPH of the downward smile and sidelong glance !  
 In what diviner moments of the day  
 Art thou most lovely ? when gone far astray  
 Into the labyrinths of sweet utterance ?  
 Or when serenely wandering in a trance  
 Of sober thought ? Or when starting away,  
 With careless robe to meet the morning ray,  
 Thou sparest the flowers in thy mazy dance ?  
 Haply 'tis when thy ruby lips part sweetly,  
 And so remain, because thou listenest :  
 But thou to please wert nurtured so completely  
 That I can never tell what mood is best,  
 I shall as soon pronounce which Grace more neatly  
 Trips it before Apollo than the rest.

## VII.

WRITTEN ON THE DAY THAT MR. LEIGH HUNT LEFT PRISON

WHAT though, for showing truth to flatter'd state,  
 Kind Hunt was shut in prison, yet has he,  
 In his immortal spirit, been as free  
 As the sky-searching lark, and as elate.  
 Minion of grandeur ! think you he did wait ?

Think you he nought but prison-walls did see,  
 Till, so unwilling, thou unturn'dst the key ?  
 Ah, no ! far happier, nobler was his fate !  
 In Spenser's halls he stray'd, and bowers fair,  
 Culling enchanted flowers ; and he flew  
 With daring Milton through the fields of air :  
 To regions of his own his genius true  
 Took happy flights. Who shall his fame impair  
 When thou art dead, and all thy wretched crew ?

## VIII.

## TO MY BROTHER.

SMALL, busy flames play through the fresh-laid coals,  
 And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep  
 Like whispers of the household gods that keep  
 A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls.  
 And while, for rhymes, I search around the poles,  
 Your eyes are fix'd, as in poetic sleep,  
 Upon the lore so voluble and deep,  
 That aye at fall of night our care condoles.  
 This is your birth-day, Tom, and I rejoice  
 That thus it passes smoothly, quietly :  
 Many such eves of gently whispering noise  
 May we together pass, and calmly try  
 What are this world's true joys,—ere the great Voice  
 From its fair face shall bid our spirits fly.





IX.

ADDRESSED TO HAYDON.

HIGH-MINDEDNESS, a jealousy for good,  
 A loving-kindness for the great man's fame,  
 Dwells here and there with people of no name,  
 In noisome alley, and in pathless wood :  
 And where we think the truth least understood,  
 Oft may be found a "singleness of aim,"  
 That ought to frighten into hooded shame  
 A money-mongering, pitiable brood.  
 How glorious this affection for the cause  
 Of steadfast genius, toiling gallantly !  
 What when a stout unbending champion awes  
 Envy, and malice to their native sty ?  
 Unnumber'd souls breathe out a still applause,  
 Proud to behold him in his country's eye.

## X.

ADDRESSED TO THE SAME.

GREAT spirits now on earth are sojourning :  
     He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,  
     Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide awake,  
 Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing :  
 He of the rose, the violet, the spring,  
     The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake :  
     And lo! whose steadfastness would never take  
 A meaner sound than Raphael's whispering.  
 And other spirits there are standing apart  
     Upon the forehead of the age to come ;  
 These, these will give the world another heart,  
     And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum  
 Of mighty workings?—  
 Listen awhile, ye nations, and be dumb.

## XI.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold,  
     And many goodly states and kingdoms seen ;  
     Round many western islands have I been  
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.  
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told  
     That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne :  
     Yet did I never breathe its pure serene  
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold :

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
 When a new planet swims into his ken ;  
 Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes  
 He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
 Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—  
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

## XII.

ON LEAVING SOME FRIENDS AT AN EARLY HOUR.

GIVE me a golden pen, and let me lean  
 On heap'd-up flowers, in regions clear, and far ;  
 Bring me a tablet whiter than a star,  
 Or hand of hymning angel, when 'tis seen  
 The silver strings of heavenly harp atween :  
 And let there glide by many a pearly car,  
 Pink robes, and wavy hair, and diamond jar,  
 And half-discover'd wings, and glances keen.  
 The while let music wander round my ears,  
 And as it reaches each delicious ending,  
 Let me write down a line of glorious tone,  
 And full of many wonders of the spheres :  
 For what a height my spirit is contending !  
 'Tis not content so soon to be alone.

## XIII.

KEEN fitful gusts are whispering here and there  
 Among the bushes, half leafless and dry ;  
 The stars look very cold about the sky,  
 And I have many miles on foot to fare ;

Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air,  
 Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,  
 Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,  
 Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair :  
 For I am brimfull of the friendliness  
 That in a little cottage I have found ;  
 Of fair-hair'd Milton's eloquent distress,  
 And all his love for gentle Lyeid' drown'd ;  
 Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,  
 And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown'd.

## XIV.

To one who has been long in city pent,  
 'Tis very sweet to look into the fair  
 And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer  
 Full in the smile of the blue firmament.  
 Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,  
 Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair  
 Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair  
 And gentle tale of love and languishment ?  
 Returning home at evening, with an ear  
 Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye  
 Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,  
 He mourns that day so soon has glided by :  
 E'en like the passage of an angel's tear  
 That falls through the clear ether silently.





XV.

## ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET.

THE poetry of earth is never dead :

When all the birds are faint with the hot sun.

And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run  
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead :  
That is the grasshopper's—he takes the lead

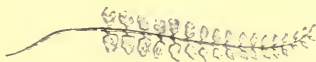
In summer luxury,—he has never done.

With his delights, for when tired out with fun,  
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.

The poetry of earth is ceasing never :

On a lone winter evening, when the frost  
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills  
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever.

And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,  
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.



## XVI.

TO KOSCIUSKO.

GOOD Kosciusko ! thy great name alone  
Is a full harvest whence to reap high feeling ;  
It comes upon us like the glorious pealing  
Of the wide spheres—an everlasting tone.  
And now it tells me, that in worlds unknown,  
The names of heroes, burst from clouds concealing,  
Are changed to harmonies, for ever stealing  
Through cloudless blue, and round each silver throne.  
It tells me too, that on a happy day,  
When some good spirit walks upon the earth,  
Thy name with Alfred's, and the great of yore,  
Gently commingling, gives tremendous birth  
To a loud hymn, that sounds far, far away  
To where the great God lives for evermore.

## XVII.

HAPPY is England ! I could be content  
To see no other verdure than its own ;  
To feel no other breezes than are blown  
Through its tall woods with high romances blent ;  
Yet do I sometimes feel a languishment  
For skies Italian, and an inward groan  
To sit upon an Alp as on a throne,  
And half forget what world or worldling meant.



Happy is England, sweet her artless daughters ;  
Enough their simple loveliness for me,  
Enough their whitest arms in silence clinging :  
Yet do I often warmly burn to see  
Beauties of deeper glance, and hear their singing,  
And float with them about the summer waters.

## XVIII.

## THE HUMAN SEASONS.

FOUR Seasons fill the measure of the year ;  
There are four seasons in the mind of man :  
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear  
Takes in all beauty with an easy span :  
He has his Summer, when luxuriously  
Spring's honey'd cud of youthful thought he loves  
To ruminate, and by such dreaming high  
Is nearest unto heaven : quiet coves  
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings  
He furlcth close ; contented so to look  
On mists in idleness—to let fair things  
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.  
He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,  
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.





XIX.

ON A PICTURE OF LEANDER.

COME hither, all sweet maidens soberly,  
 Down-looking aye, and with a chasten'd light,  
 Hid in the fringes of your eyelids white,  
 And meekly let your fair hands joined be,  
 As if so gentle that ye could not see,  
 Untouch'd, a victim of your beauty bright,  
 Sinking away to his young spirit's night,  
 Sinking bewilder'd 'mid the dreary sea :  
 'Tis young Leander toiling to his death ;  
 Nigh swooning, he doth purse his weary lips  
 For Hero's check, and smiles against her smile.  
 O horrid dream ! see how his body dips  
 Dead-heavy ; arms and shoulders gleam awhile :  
 He's gone ; up bubbles all his amorous breath !

XX.

TO AILSA ROCK.

HEARKEN, thou craggy ocean pyramid !  
Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowl's screams !  
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams !  
When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid ?  
How long is't since the mighty power bid  
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams ?  
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sun-beams,  
Or when grey clouds are thy cold cover-lid ?  
Thou answer'st not, for thou art dead asleep !  
Thy life is but two dead eternities—  
The last in air, the former in the deep ;  
First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies—  
Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,  
Another cannot wake thy giant size.



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